

EGYPT AND THE LIMITS OF HELLENISM



Ian S. Moyer

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In a series of studies, Ian Moyer explores the ancient history and modern historiography of relations between Egypt and Greece from the fifth century BCE to the early Roman empire. Beginning with Herodotus, he analyzes key encounters between Greeks and Egyptian priests, the bearers of Egypt's ancient traditions. Four moments unfold as rich micro-histories of cross-cultural interaction: Herodotus' interviews with priests at Thebes; Manetho's composition of an Egyptian history in Greek; the struggles of Egyptian priests on Delos; and a Greek physician's quest for magic in Egypt. In writing these histories, the author moves beyond Orientalizing representations of the Other and colonial metanarratives of the civilizing process to reveal interactions between Greeks and Egyptians as transactional processes in which the traditions, discourses, and pragmatic interests of both sides shaped the outcome. The result is a dialogical history of cultural and intellectual exchanges between the great civilizations of Greece and Egypt.

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521765510

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First published 2011

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Moyer, Ian S., 1971–

Egypt and the limits of Hellenism / Ian S. Moyer.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-76551-0

1. Egypt – History – Greco-Roman period, 332 B.C.–640 A.D. 2. Egypt – Civilization – Greek influences. 3. Greece – Civilization – Egyptian influences. 4. Egypt – Relations – Greece.
5. Greece – Relations – Egypt. 6. Greeks – Egypt – History. I. Title.

DT92.M69 2011

932'.021 – dc22 2011013509

ISBN 978-0-521-76551-0 Hardback

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Acknowledgments

This is a book about a recurrent, generative dialogue that spanned centuries and crossed cultural lines. The book itself is also the product of innumerable dialogues with teachers, colleagues, students, friends and family, dialogues that crossed disciplines, generational divides, and various other borders. It did not take centuries to write (despite my own perceptions of time at particular moments), but it did take several years, during which I accumulated the many debts I owe to those who were willing to participate in this dialogical endeavor. Here I would like to record my deep gratitude to them. If the reader finds any faults with the written results, they are, of course, my responsibility alone.

This book began life as a PhD dissertation written under the auspices of the Committee on the Ancient Mediterranean World at the University of Chicago. There it benefited enormously from the guidance of my supervisor, Chris Faraone, and my advisors, Robert Ritner and J. Z. Smith. While at Chicago a number of other individuals took an interest, read a chapter, shared ideas, provided help and encouragement or all of the above. These include Michael Dietler, Peter Dorman, Kathy Fox, Jonathan Hall, Janet Johnson, Bruce Lincoln, James Redfield, Peter White, David Wray, and a wonderfully supportive and convivial group of fellow students. During this time I also received generous financial support from the University of Chicago, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Franke Institute for the Humanities.

People beyond Chicago also contributed, both while I studied there and during the years since, by very kindly reading and critiquing drafts and preliminary studies. These include Paul Cartledge, Martine Cuypers, Jacco Dieleman, Sara Forsdyke, Friedhelm Hoffmann, Philippe Matthey, Kim Ryholt, Alex Stevens, Dorothy Thompson and Phiroze Vasunia. I must also thank the anonymous readers chosen by the press for going through the text with great care and saving me from many errors. The generosity of scholars who shared their unpublished work with me accelerated my research

and helped to keep me abreast of new evidence and new interpretations. In particular, I would like to thank Carolin Arlt, Philippe Bourgeaud, Arsenio Ferraces Rodríguez, François Gaudard, Stephan Heilen, Friedhelm Hoffmann, Joe Manning, Tomas Markiewicz, Philippe Matthey, Robert Ritner, Ian Rutherford, and Kim Ryholt.

While these textual dialogues were enormously important, there were other, more informal conversations and exchanges that also sustained my work, and I would be remiss if I did not mention the various other individuals who took the time to share their insights with me. These include Kevin Van Bladel, Glen Bowersock, Keith Bradley, Ari Bryen, Stanley Burstein, David Frankfurter, Fritz Graf, Cam Grey, Cristiano Grottanelli, Erich Gruen, Sarah Iles Johnston, Heinrich Von Staden and Phil Venticinque. I also benefited from the opportunity to discuss work in progress with audiences at the Universities of Cambridge, Chicago, Michigan, Notre Dame, Oxford and Reading, and at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton.

In addition to providing me with an excellent first job at a great liberal arts college, Pomona College generously supported me with multiple grants for summer research excursions. In organizing a visit to Delos in 2005, I received invaluable practical assistance from Stephen Tracy, director of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and Dominique Mulliez, director of the École française d'Athènes. On the island itself, I had the good fortune to enjoy the assistance and hospitality of Jean-Charles Moretti and his survey team, and the guidance of Panayiotis Hatzidakis in the Delos Museum. While working on this book, I was also supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend. Under the auspices of a Mellon Fellowship for Assistant Professors, I was able to spend an incomparable year of research and discussion as a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Since finding a stimulating new home at the University of Michigan, my work has been supported by grants from the History Department and the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies. Michael Sharp and his colleagues at Cambridge University Press have been exemplary professionals in shepherding this book through the editorial process and I thank them for their help and patience.

I reserve my last and most profound thanks for my family. Conversations with my father, David Moyer, shaped the earliest stages of this work, and I regret that he was unable to see this book on one of his many bookshelves. My mother, Gretchen McCulloch, also helped and encouraged me in my early academic pursuits, and my twin brother, Colin Moyer, has been a

great interlocutor since day one. In more recent years, my father- and mother-in-law, John and Nancy Widman, have been great supporters as well. Finally, I thank my wife, Jennifer, to whom I owe so much and without whose love, patience, and loyalty none of this work would be possible or worthwhile.

Introduction

The absence of Egypt

Dialectic-history: the past is more than just one other country.

Marshall Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides*

In his classic study, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization*, Arnaldo Momigliano explored what he called “an intellectual event of the first order, the confrontation of the Greeks with four other civilizations” in the Hellenistic period: Romans, Celts, Jews, and Iranians.¹ Remarkable for its absence from his account is the ancient civilization of the Egyptians, which had long fascinated the Greeks, and, after the conquests of Alexander, confronted them more directly than ever before.² Momigliano’s argument for excluding Egypt from his lectures was twofold. First, “there was no dramatic change in the Greek evaluation of Egypt during the Hellenistic period.” Egypt from Homer through Herodotus had been a fantastical land of “strange customs” and “unusual knowledge” and remained so into the Hellenistic period.³ Secondly,

Native Egyptian culture declined during the Hellenistic period because it was under the direct control of the Greeks and came to represent an inferior stratum of the population. Moreover, the “hermetic character of the language and of the script” . . . made the Egyptian-speaking priest – not to mention the peasant – singularly unable to communicate with the Greeks.

Momigliano went on to state that “the Hellenistic Greeks preferred the fanciful images of an eternal Egypt to the Egyptian thought of their time.”⁴

In excluding Egypt from his study over thirty years ago, Momigliano revealed a gap in contemporary histories of interaction between ancient Greeks and Egyptians – a gap that continues to the present. Egypt and

¹ Momigliano 1975a: 2.

² I am certainly not the first to notice the absence of Egypt in these lectures. See, for example, the review by Will 1977 and the critique by Ritner 1992: 283–84.

³ Cf. Préaux 1978: 2, 548. ⁴ Momigliano 1975a: 3–4.

Egyptians have not been historical subjects, but absent objects of representation. In the terms of Momigliano's *praeteritio*, Egypt is subordinated to Hellenism – first, through an intellectual imperialism that exoticized and dominated Egypt, its customs, and its wisdom through representations that served Greek needs or desires; and then through the actual conquest of Alexander, who brought Hellenistic rule and Greek civilization to Egypt. When it comes to imagining these encounters with Hellenism, Egyptian civilization has had no part to play, no voice of its own. In this book, I address the absence of Egypt that Momigliano articulated. I explore a long history of cultural interactions through four transactional moments – moments when Egyptian as well as Greek discourses, actions, and representations produced the historical outcome. This book is an attempt to write dialectic and even dialogic histories, rather than a monological “tradition-history” of the West.⁵ The particular moments I have chosen to focus on are all rich stories in themselves: Herodotus’ meeting with Egyptian priests in Thebes, Manetho’s composition of an Egyptian history in Greek, the arrival of Egyptian gods on the Greek island of Delos, and a Greek doctor’s magical revelation in Egypt. But they have also been important in various ways to modern histories of Hellenism and the encounter between Greeks and Egyptians. These are moments through which it is possible to explore both the cultural and intellectual histories of Egyptians at the boundaries of Hellenism, and also the conceptual limits of Hellenism as drawn in Momigliano’s *praeteritio* and other gestures of exclusion. It is these latter, modern limits that I shall explore in this introductory chapter.

REPRESENTING EGYPT: ETHNOGRAPHY AND ORIENTALISM

Egypt, in the history of Hellenism, is “other” twice over: an Other not only to ancient Greeks, but also to modern historians, classicists, and other students of Hellenism. This double alterity is the product of scholarly analogies and cultural affiliations that have identified Greek civilization as the Western subject at the center of narratives, discourses, and theories of modern European and American historiography. Even when Momigliano and others have examined the limits that constrained Greek knowledge of Egypt, their often acute analyses get caught up in the problem of representing the other, since Egypt, by analogy with the West’s other “others” is imagined as illusory, repressed, or irretrievable. In such accounts, Egypt is not the subject of an historical narrative or the central referent of discourse

⁵ Sahlins 2004: 8–9.

or theory, but an object of representations which appropriate and incorporate an Egyptian “other” into the “same” of Western knowledge.⁶ Similarly, Egyptians in Momigliano’s brief sketch of the Hellenistic encounter with Egypt are historical actors either not at all, or only within a metanarrative of isolation and decline derived from a Eurocentric historiography. These two parts of Momigliano’s *praeteritio* frame a fundamental conceptual problem in representing Egypt in the history of Hellenism.

Perhaps the most prominent aspect of this problem in classical scholarship of the last three decades is outlined in Momigliano’s first argument for excluding Egypt: the limitations of a Greek discourse on Egypt that took shape in the centuries before Alexander. Especially critical for reconstructing this discourse is the second book of Herodotus’ *Histories*. This is the classic formulation of Egyptian culture as exotic, topsy-turvy, and yet primordial. As Momigliano wrote, “Herodotus gave two ultimately contradictory reasons for spending so much of his time on [Egypt], first that ‘the Egyptians in most of their manners and customs reverse the common practice of mankind’ (2.35), and secondly that the Greeks derived so many of their religious and scientific notions from the Egyptians . . . (2.81 *et passim*).”⁷ Herodotus in his portrait of Egypt did present beliefs and practices that were marvelous for his Greek audience, and yet he also attributed Egyptian origins to Greek cultural forms and practices. In the *Histories*, Egypt is the land with the most natural and cultural wonders, but it is also a land of beginnings,⁸ of primeval culture. In creating this paradoxical portrait, Herodotus (it has been argued) epitomizes a Western gaze which surveys and creates order out of an imagined landscape of Egypt for its own cultural purposes.⁹ Herodotus has been approximated, in other words, to the early modern ethnographer, and a critique has developed in which his ethnocentric descriptions are understood as products of a Greek rhetoric of alterity that reveals Greek anxieties, prejudices and self-definitions.

This general approach to reading Herodotus’ ethnography has been most famously elaborated in the work of François Hartog, but a more comprehensive study of the Greek myth of Egypt was produced by Christian Froidefond a few years before Momigliano’s lectures.¹⁰ Froidefond

⁶ Young 1990: esp. 1–20 outlines this problematic, dominating dialectic of same and other in Western historiography, and analyzes several important postmodern and post-colonial approaches to escaping this impasse of historical representation.

⁷ Momigliano 1975a: 3. ⁸ Hdt. 2.35.1.

⁹ See the discussions of Froidefond 1971, Hartog 1980, 1986, 1996, and Vasunia 2001 below. A brief overview along these lines is also given by Harrison 2003.

¹⁰ Froidefond 1971.

explored the manifold ways in which Greek texts from Homer to Aristotle idealized the ancient and mysterious land of Egypt, and yet in this idealization confined Egypt to certain limits. In this work, he devoted a substantial discussion to Herodotus' second book, its background in Ionian natural and speculative philosophy, and its reception.¹¹ He argued that for Herodotus and other Ionian writers, Egypt was the privileged terrain for geographical and historical thought. Its natural features, especially the regular yet anomalous flooding of the Nile, were amenable to abstraction, idealization, and systematization. The great chronological depth of Egyptian civilization and the apparent antiquity of its customs made Egypt uniquely suited to the investigation of cultural origins. Egypt, Froidefond argued, became the primeval landscape in which ethnographers like Herodotus carried out the task of explaining cultural origins. The analogy between this literature and modern Western ethnography becomes especially clear in Froidefond's treatment of Herodotus' passages on Egyptian religion. In his view, Egyptian religion was Herodotus' "forest of symbols," a disordered agglomeration characterized by primitivism and superstition, which the Greek historian (mis)interpreted as a rational system. There is no disguising the implications: Greek thought was Western, advanced and rational, and it manipulated the passive matter of a "primitive" Egyptian mentality.¹² If Herodotus did indeed misrepresent Egyptian culture in this way, Froidefond's *mirage égyptien* is perhaps no less at fault.

Subsequent scholarship on the Greek representation of Egypt has continued to pursue the ethnographical analogy which aligns Herodotus with the early modern explorer or anthropologist in order to reveal further the fascinations and fabrications of the "Egyptian mirage," but it has also become much more critical of the implications of this relationship. This is part of a broader effort to analyze Greek constructions of the self as the other of an other: in particular, Greek self-definitions elaborated in

¹¹ On this intellectual background, see now Thomas 2000.

¹² Egypt's role as a primitive society in Froidefond's analysis is quite explicit: "Sur le plan intellectuel, et d'une façon plus générale, on peut dire que la religion manifestait . . . quelques-unes des tendances permanentes de la mentalité égyptienne, à savoir: admettre simultanément, et sans établir de hiérarchie, le plus évolué et le moins évolué, le plus concret et le plus abstrait; ou cette tendance encore, qui caractérise tous les 'primitifs': attribuer autant de pouvoir, de valeur, d'existence à la représentation d'un objet ou d'une entité qu'à cet objet, cette entité même." Froidefond 1971: 201. Egyptian thought is like the irrational "magical" thought studied by the early ethnographer, and it is Herodotus, according to Froidefond 1971: 201–3, who provides spurious rationalizations. Though not made explicit, the reference to Egypt as a "forêt de 'symboles'" (Froidefond 1971: 200) is perhaps an allusion to Victor Turner's classic study (*The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*).

opposition to the figure of the barbarian. Hartog's study of the Scythians in Herodotus and subsequent works by scholars such as Edith Hall and Paul Cartledge have analyzed the cultural poetics at work in Greek representations of other cultures, and have made important contributions to elucidating aspects of Greek thought and self-definition. Egypt was touched on only briefly in this work,¹³ but in the most recent and comprehensive application of this approach, Phiroze Vasunia has drawn on the work of Hartog, and also situated the Greek construction of the Egyptian "other" in the wider theoretical framework of post-colonial critiques of Orientalism.¹⁴ Vasunia did not limit himself to Herodotus' ethnography, but also examined images of Egypt in Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato, and Isocrates, exploring, like Edward Said, a Western discourse which dominates, restructures, and has authority over "the Orient."¹⁵ In this sense, Vasunia's study explores the politics of knowledge that informed the idea of Egypt in Greek thought and literature. Though he compared Egyptian *realia* to the Greek texts,¹⁶ Vasunia's primary aim was "to understand the limits and parameters within which the barbarian functions and to appreciate the flexible but ultimately circumscribed space that no foreigner can transcend in the Hellenic imagination."¹⁷

In their analyses of the Scythians and the Egyptians as they existed in the Greek imagination, Hartog and Vasunia engaged with different strands of contemporary theory and criticism. Both works, however, share with their sources a self-reflexive, inwardly oriented approach, taking as their subjects various internally coherent Western representations of the other, and explaining how such knowledge was created. For Hartog's analysis of the rhetoric of alterity in the *Histories*, Michel de Certeau is especially important, along with his privileged example of ethnography, the early modern travel writing of Jean de Léry.¹⁸ Hartog describes Herodotus' method as translation, a means of conveying the distant and foreign *other* to the *same*, to the geographical and cultural location shared by Herodotus

¹³ Hartog 1980 focused primarily on the Scythian Logos in Hdt. 4, and Hall 1989 examined Greek self-definition through depictions of the barbarian in tragedy following the Persian Wars. Hartog 1986 and 2001: 41–77 has produced brief accounts of the Greek reception of Egypt. Cartledge 2002: 71–74 used the account of Egypt in the second book of the *Histories* as an example of Herodotus' rhetoric of otherness.

¹⁴ Vasunia 2001: 11–17. ¹⁵ Vasunia 2001: 11–12; Said 1978.

¹⁶ Vasunia 2001: 8–9 describes the summaries of Egyptian scholarship on particular issues that he "juxtaposes" to Greek views as a "counterpoint." When, for example, Vasunia 2001: 110–35 considers Herodotus' representations of Egyptian history and conceptions of time, he does acknowledge contemporary Egyptian views, but does not explore the interrelationship between the two.

¹⁷ Vasunia 2001: 6.

¹⁸ Hartog 1988: 215, 237–38, 248–50, 263, 286–88, 296, 308; de Certeau 1988: 209–43.

and his audience: the language of the Greeks, their existing knowledge, their horizons and expectations. In de Certeau's analysis of Jean de Léry, the itinerary of translation (*translatio*) is even clearer. His travel narrative is a voyage from "over here" in Europe to "over there" in the Americas and back again. The work of bringing the other back to the same takes the form of an exegesis that replaces the spoken words of the primitive other with profitable, written meaning and a way for the West to articulate its own identity. This process of ethnographic writing, de Certeau observed, left behind an unrecoverable remainder, the elusive speech of the other which provoked the writing in the first place. In explaining the process, de Certeau acknowledged that he replicated its effects, and he disclaimed any ability to represent the lost voice of the other that lies behind the text.¹⁹ Hartog also excludes what is external to the text, though for different reasons. He rejects as simplistic positivism any evaluation of Herodotus' quality as an historian that relies on comparisons with a Scythian point of view reconstructed from archaeology or Ossetian epic, opting instead for points of reference within the *Histories* and within the shared knowledge of fifth-century Greeks.²⁰ Though both Hartog and de Certeau focus on "Western" practices of translating the other and writing an ethnographic text, the approaches of Herodotus and de Léry are in fact not quite commensurable, as Hartog himself points out. Jean de Léry created the "savage" and self-consciously replaced the voice of the savage with writing. Herodotus, on the other hand, created the "barbarian." Since the barbarian (especially the Egyptian) could write, there was no *leçon d'écriture* in Herodotus. Though his ethnography was written, he did not translate the other across a strong divide between his own authoritative textuality and the orality of his object. Herodotus was himself between orality and literacy. Relative to the literate barbarian, he did not have, nor was he conscious of, that differential power of writing which looms over modern Western ethnography.²¹ Hartog points out this difference but never asks the questions that follow. Is the speech of the other as evanescent in Herodotus' work as it is in Jean de Léry's? Did Herodotus' representation entirely supplant the voice of the other, or is it the analogy to modern ethnography that does this work?

¹⁹ de Certeau 1988: 211–15. The "other" in de Certeau is treated in terms similar to Lacan's little other and big Other, though Hartog does not explicitly adopt this perspective.

²⁰ Hartog 1988: 3–7 rejects the externally oriented approach for these reasons but also because of his own lack of knowledge in the required areas of expertise and the fact that it was already pursued by Dumézil and others.

²¹ Hartog 1988: 286–89. On the "*leçon d'écriture*" in Jean de Léry, see de Certeau 1988: 212–15; see also Claude Lévi-Strauss' classic meditation in *Tristes Tropiques* (1974: 294–304) and J. Clifford's discussion of the ethnographic textualization of oral discourse (1988: 37–41).

Though Vasunia also works with the ethnographic analogy,²² he ranges more widely across authors and genres to analyze the constraints within which ancient Greek artists, historians, philosophers, and rhetoricians could comprehensibly represent the Egyptian other, and he moves beyond the bounds of textual criticism to consider the political effects of these representations. These are among the advantages he gains by adopting as a model Said's critique of Orientalist discourse. Along with this choice, however, come some of the limitations of Said's original project. Perhaps Said's most influential contribution was redefining Orientalism as an object of analysis by turning Michel Foucault's concept of discourse toward cultural constructions of the exotic, external other in colonial and imperial contexts. Foucault, of course, had been concerned with internal others and was self-consciously Eurocentric in his critiques.²³ Despite this shift, Said's account of Orientalism (as critics have pointed out) remains paradoxically embedded in Western discourses, and his oppositional stance did not escape some of the problematic modes of representation that he criticized.²⁴ An essentializing portrait of the West, one that verges on "Occidentalism," emerges from Said's critique, and the perspective from which he surveyed the misrepresentations of Orientalism was a humanism that has, historically, made universals out of Western categories of thought and experience.²⁵ The Orient itself and its historical responses to Orientalism play virtually no role in contesting the distortions of this complex, self-referential system.²⁶ Europe and its dialectic of same and other remain the core subjects, and Said did not, in this work at least, offer a clear alternative response to the question, "How does one *represent* other cultures?" without falling into the problematic binarism that seems inherent in the question itself.²⁷ Said was aware of this lacuna, and in later works filled it,²⁸ but such refinements have not

²² The work of J. Fabian, for example, is important to Vasunia's analysis of Herodotus (2001: 113–14).

²³ Clifford 1988: 264–65.

²⁴ See Clifford 1988: 255–76 (originally published as Clifford 1980), Young 1990: 119–40.

²⁵ Clifford 1988: 263, 271; Young 1990: 119–25, 130–31, 138–39; O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992: 155–58.

²⁶ Said's neglect of the "real" Orient was in part justified by his approach to Orientalism as a construct of the Western imagination. See, e.g., Said 1978: 71–72: "we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate. What it is trying to do . . . is at one and the same time to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager and actors are *for* Europe, and only *for* Europe." See also Said 1978: 5, 21, 24, 94–95 and below.

²⁷ Said 1978: 325; Clifford 1988: 259–61; Young 1990: 127, 137–38.

²⁸ See n. 24 above, and Said 1978: 325–28. Said did note in his later "Afterword" to *Orientalism* (1994: 337) that in *The Question of Palestine* (1980) and *Covering Islam* (1981) he attempted "to supply what was missing in *Orientalism*, namely a sense of what an alternative picture of parts of the Orient – Palestine and Islam respectively – might be from a personal perspective." He also briefly

always traveled with his original concept. This was largely the case when *Orientalism* came to Classics, a field in which there had already been a well-developed interest in Greek accounts of barbarians as well as disciplinary boundaries that generally constrained scholars to canonical Greek texts.²⁹ Vasunia's account goes beyond this tendency and does juxtapose Egyptian texts, ideas, or practices to Greek representations as part of the process of countering and falsifying their claims.³⁰ Such juxtapositions, however, in showing that Greek representations often had nothing to do with Egyptian realities, do not entirely undo the Greek–Egyptian dichotomy of the texts analyzed, and indeed they tend to preserve it at the level of scholarly analysis. Egyptians, moreover, are missing, and the subject of this work remains Western discourse on and domination of an Orientalized other.³¹

In Said's Foucauldian analysis, discourse preceded and prepared for domination. Power followed knowledge. Orientalism was not a rationalization of colonial rule after the fact; it justified colonial rule in advance. Said presented the long history of this discursive propaedeutic in the form of a genealogy that stretches back to Greek antiquity – a strategic redeployment of the standard myth of Western origins. Aeschylus' *Persians* and Euripides' *Bacchae* are among the privileged first texts of Orientalism.³² Classicists inspired by Said have explicitly or implicitly accepted this genealogy,³³ and Vasunia (among others) astutely points out the use of ancient Greek representations of the barbarian other, and of classical civilization more generally, in modern colonial and imperial projects.³⁴ The adoption of Said's

revisits his account of the Napoleonic expedition by drawing more attention to the historiographical perspective of Abdal-Rahman al-Jabarti's description of the invasion (Said 1994: 333–34). *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) was a sustained attempt to fill the lacunae of *Orientalism*.

²⁹ For Said's impact on Hellenists, see Vasunia 2003: 88–89.

³⁰ For this method of juxtaposition in order to counter Greek texts, and reveal what they have obscured, see Vasunia 2001: 9, 16–17, 29–32, 106–9, 126–31, 148, 152–54, 160–75, 182. At times, this effort is defeated when the “Egyptian” *realia* consist of idiosyncratic and self-consciously modern (Western) readings of Egyptian texts, such as Tom Hare's *ReMembering Osiris* (see the review by Troy 2002).

³¹ It is important to note that in more recent series of articles, Vasunia (2003, 2005a, 2007) has shifted his focus to a new direction: a more thorough examination of the interrelationships between classical civilization and modern imperialism in order to understand the trajectories of modern classical scholarship on these issues. This approach has been very fruitful. See further references below.

³² Said 1978: 20–21, 53–54, 56–58.

³³ The seminal work of E. Hall on *Inventing the Barbarian* (1989), e.g., explores the representation of the barbarian in Greek tragedy. This should now be read together with Hall's own insightful revisitation of her work (2006: 184–224) in the light of subsequent developments in post-colonial studies and other fields of criticism.

³⁴ On the reception of this genealogy in relation to Classics and the study of Hellenism, see Vasunia 2003: 88–91. On the use of Greek texts such as Herodotus in the context of modern imperial and colonial conquests, see, e.g. Vasunia 2001: 75, 110. See also his studies of Greek, Latin and the

teleology of empire to the ancient past, however, risks the hermeneutic circularity of reading Greek representations through the lenses of European colonial ideologies that were in part founded on selective appropriations of the classical past.³⁵ Herodotus, in such readings, is not merely an ethnographer, he becomes an auxiliary to empire-building.³⁶ Vasunia pursues this argument explicitly: the Greek discourse on Egypt made Alexander's conquest of Egypt possible, and shaped its course.³⁷ The analogy he draws with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, a foundational moment of Orientalism, is suggestive, but perhaps even more valuable because it is fraught with so many productive strains and incongruities.

Alexander undoubtedly drew on the pre-existing archive of Greek knowledge about the lands he intended to invade. And he and his father Philip before him, at least initially, imagined the conquest of Asia as a continuation of legendary and historical wars against the Trojans and the Persians. The latter, in fact, is a far more obvious motivation for Alexander's campaigns and for his invasion of Egypt (a satrapy of the Persian empire at the time) than Greek texts on Egypt. Fourth-century orators and intellectuals had repeatedly painted the Persians as weak, corrupt, and effeminate and called for a war against them.³⁸ In the archive available to Alexander, however, no text can be endowed with the practical importance that Said assigns to the Comte de Volney's *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie* and *Considérations sur la guerre actuelle des Turcs*, texts that served Napoleon as virtual handbooks in preparing his campaigns. Herodotus and other Greeks did not compose texts with Volney's manifest interest in providing information useful to the conquest of the Orient, and even if Greek intellectuals advised Alexander directly about his conduct toward "barbarians" it is not clear that they had much influence.³⁹ Ancient Greek ethnographies, moreover, did not

British civil service in India (2005a), and of imperial comparisons of "Greater Rome and Greater Britain" (2005b). The genealogical and comparative relationships between ancient and modern empires were quite explicit in the work not only of scholars but also of the agents of empire – indeed they were often one and the same. See, e.g., Sir George Cornewall Lewis' essay *On the Government of Dependencies* (1841, republished 1891) or Lord Cromer's study of *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (1910). Several scholars (in addition to Vasunia) have addressed various aspects of these entanglements (e.g. Jenkins 1980: 331–36, Majeed 1999, Bell 2006, Liddel 2009). See further below.

³⁵ W. Nippel (2002) offers a brief and more historical version of the intellectual genealogy of Western constructions of the other, one that is open to the transformations, contingencies, and acts of selective appropriation in what is so often presumed to be unproblematically continuous tradition. See also Browning 1989.

³⁶ Vasunia 2001: 12. ³⁷ Vasunia 2001: 11–12 and 248–88.

³⁸ For a brief summary of these works, see Isaac 2004: 283–98.

³⁹ See Said 1978: 81–82. Volney's description of Alexandria, for example, considers its fortifications and the practicalities faced by a foreign power that would want to establish itself there (Volney

become enmeshed in social-scientific projects to reform Egyptians, as in the later British colonial regime.⁴⁰ Philosophers and natural scientists did accompany Alexander, but there is no evidence for a formal body quite like the *Commission des Sciences et des Arts* that Napoleon made an integral part of his armed expedition and even endowed with a military structure. Nevertheless, Vasunia has argued that the knowledge–power teleology culminated in a scientific expedition up the Nile, dispatched by Alexander, in order to find the causes of its irregular flooding – a “collusion between science and imperialism,” and an anticipation of the *Description de l'Égypte*.⁴¹ This configuration evokes the link between antiquity and modernity laid out in Said's genealogy of Orientalism, but this is a genealogy in part forged by the authors of the *Description*.⁴² Accepting this link equates ancient relations of knowledge and power to those in modern imperial projects. This is a powerful idea, but what gets lost in such a domesticating translation? Are there not other ways of figuring the relations of knowledge and power between Greece and Egypt? Ones that do not recapitulate, but rather disturb and dislocate those modern genealogies and histories in which the “other” serves merely as an object to be incorporated into the intellectual and territorial domains of the West?

1792: 1.4–6). Isocrates (to choose one ancient example) did urge war against the Persians in the *Panegyricus* and his *Address to Philip*, but he paid little attention to Egypt. As for the influence of Aristotle and other advisors on Alexander, later tradition held that he ignored their advice to regard non-Greeks as enemies, slaves, or even subhuman (see Strabo 1.4.9; Plut. *Mor.* 329 b–d). For the difficulties in using these sources, see Isaac 2004: 299–302 and Badian 1958: 434–44.

⁴⁰ See Mitchell 1991: 95–127, esp. 104–11.

⁴¹ The actual evidence for a scientific expedition during Alexander's visit to Egypt is disputable. Vasunia's argument for the reality of a Nile expedition (2001: 278–82) follows Burstein 1976 in citing Lydus, *Mens.* 4.107 (sixth century CE), who was relying on Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*, though Lydus clearly gives erroneous information. Vasunia and Burstein also refer to a comment by Eratosthenes (cited in Procl. *In Ti.* 22e) that expeditions have been made to see the “summer rains.” Eratosthenes is Ptolemaic in date (ca. 285–194 BCE), so the unspecified expeditions may have taken place under the Ptolemaic dynasty rather than under Alexander. The *Alexander Romance* mentions contact with Candace, queen of Meroe, but this is a doubtful historical source, and it certainly says nothing about searching for the source of the Nile flood. The only other source is Luc. 10.272–75, and at that date (first century CE), and in that context, Lucan is probably drawing on fanciful elements of the Alexander tradition. Burstein's theory that Seneca and Lucan were drawing on a genuine tradition of a journey up the Nile by Callisthenes does not overcome the main reasons for doubt: the absence of any reference to such an expedition in the most reliable biographical traditions on Alexander (including those derived from Callisthenes), and the fact that Callisthenes was an authoritative name to which fabulous Alexander accounts were attached (like the *Alexander Romance*).

⁴² Fourier's *préface historique* to the *Description de l'Égypte* uses images of Greek and Roman intellectual explorers' and conquerors' visits to Egypt (referring specifically to Alexander) as the primary European historical contacts which give the Orient its value. See Said 1978: 84–85; Vasunia 2001: 283–85.

REPRESENTING EGYPT: IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL HISTORIES

This brings us to the second part of Momigliano's *praeteritio*. The Greek encounter with Egypt in the Hellenistic period, contrary to Momigliano's assertion, took a radically different form. The legacy of Greek descriptions of Egypt did, of course, persist, but the conditions under which Greeks obtained knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian culture changed entirely after Alexander's conquest and the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Momigliano, as I mentioned at the outset, passed Egypt by since it had (allegedly) become culturally subordinate to the Hellenizing Macedonians, and because, in any case, there could be no interaction between Greeks and Egyptians, owing to the inaccessibility of the Egyptian language. It is in hindsight surprising that Momigliano made these arguments, since they are not entirely consistent with his reasons for including other civilizations, and he was elsewhere quite sensitive to and critical of the imperialist and racist implications of some earlier scholarship on the Hellenistic period.⁴³ The explanation perhaps lies in the fact that Momigliano's arguments against discussing the Greek confrontation with Egyptian culture were firmly rooted in the historiography of Hellenistic Egypt; his statements simply and accurately reflected the current state of scholarly discourse in his day.

This discourse, which in various ways endures up to the present, is ultimately the legacy of Johann Gustav Droysen's *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, originally published 1836–43, in which he defined the Hellenistic period as a world-historical epoch of the highest importance: a pivotal transition between paganism and the predestined triumph of Christianity. In cultural terms, *Hellenismus* was a Hegelian synthesis of Oriental cultures and Greek civilization that overcame the divisions between earlier, more narrowly circumscribed cultures and prepared the way for the universal civilization of Christendom.⁴⁴ In political terms, this reorganization was accomplished through the domination of Eastern lands by Graeco-Macedonian rulers in the wake of Alexander's campaigns, and by the formation, in the Hellenistic

⁴³ Momigliano 1970: 152–53. As Vasunia 2003: 89 points out, "Some Hellenists have even claimed that Said's book was anticipated in large part by Arnaldo Momigliano's *Alien Wisdom*, which was first published in 1975 but based on lectures delivered a few years earlier. Whatever the merits of this claim, we can see that Said gave the issue of Greeks and barbarians an interpretative framework and depth that it had hitherto lacked, and assuredly no Hellenist treated the issue with the same commanding sweep and range of texts and materials as Said did in *Orientalism*."

⁴⁴ Perhaps the most explicit vision of the history of *Hellenismus* as a preparation for Christianity (even as an historical theodicy), is in the foreword to the second volume of the *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1843), reprinted in Droysen 1893–94: 1.298–314.

kingdoms, of a new kind of unifying monarchical state that superseded the particularism of the Greek city-states and “tribes” as well as the “national” states of the East.⁴⁵ Though Droysen was not the first to write a history of this era, nor even to interpret Macedon as a prefiguration of Prussia’s role in German political unification, it is fair to say that he invented the Hellenistic period as it is now known by defining its character in terms of a political-cultural synthesis effected by the universalization of Hellenism.⁴⁶

The first steps in the development of this idea of *Hellenismus* can be traced to Droysen’s early study of the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt. In 1831, he presented his dissertation at the University of Berlin, where he had followed several courses of lectures given by G. W. F. Hegel.⁴⁷ The studies that culminated in this dissertation, *De Lagidarum regno Ptolemaeo VI Philometore rege*,⁴⁸ were conducted primarily under the tutelage of the great classical philologist P. A. Böckh. But in this work and in contemporary correspondence, there is evidence that Droysen had already begun to approach the cultural and political conditions of the Ptolemaic kingdom from the perspective of Hegel’s philosophy of world history and to understand this period as a critical transition from classical Greek antiquity to the Roman empire and Christianity.⁴⁹ His dissertation also reveals the unquestioned supremacy of Greek civilization that would be at the core of *Hellenismus*, however synthetic the concept might appear. Egyptians and other oriental peoples were barbarians in the negative sense of the word, and he rejected the idea of Egyptian wisdom, entertained by some contemporary scholars, as the empty pretense of priestly charlatans.⁵⁰ Only through conforming to the Greek *ethos* and adopting Greek habits introduced by the new masters of the Nile, could Egyptians be redeemed from the “ancient indolence

⁴⁵ See especially Droysen 1877–78: 3.1–38. On Droysen’s formulation of Hellenism and the Hellenistic period, see Momigliano 1970 (reprinted in Momigliano 1977: 307–23 and 1994: 147–61), Bravo 1968 and Bichler 1983 (reviewed by Hornblower 1984). Momigliano, Bravo and Bichler all differ on the question of whether the political element emerged later – against the background of contemporary German political events (i.e. especially after the failure of the Frankfurt Parliament) – or whether the political and cultural elements were there from the start, even if coexisting incongruously. In any case, both these elements were important for the reception and development of Droysen’s formulation of *Hellenismus*.

⁴⁶ As Momigliano pointed out in his 1952 inaugural lecture at University College London (1994: 17–18), John Gillies had compared Philip II to Frederick II of Prussia in 1778 and had written a history of the Graeco-Macedonian states from Alexander to Augustus in 1807. See also Vasunia 2007: 93.

⁴⁷ In addition, he also studied with several “Hegelians” at Berlin. See Bravo 1968: 169–72.

⁴⁸ Reprinted in Droysen 1893–94: 2.351–443.

⁴⁹ This was a modification of Hegel’s thought in that Rome had played that vital role in the *Philosophy of World History*. On Droysen’s dissertation as a precursor to the *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, see Bravo 1968: 226–50.

⁵⁰ Droysen 1893–94: 2.363–66; Bravo 1968: 236, 240.

(*socordia*) of their way of life” and “begin to ascend to a higher level of humanity, than would seem possible for the lethargy (*torpor*) and harshness (*tristitia*) of their nature.”⁵¹

Assimilation, however, was a double-edged sword in Droysen’s early view of Ptolemaic Egypt. Though Greek civilization dominated the Ptolemaic state at first, the Egyptian element had become ascendant by the reign of Ptolemy VI, the chosen subject of Droysen’s dissertation. Through contact with barbarians, the rule of Alexander’s successors degenerated into oriental despotism and the Greeks became enfeebled by the adoption of foreign ways. This was, for Droysen, the reason that the Ptolemaic kingdom began to split apart and decompose into its various elements, as the Hegelian *Geist* moved elsewhere.⁵² Hellenism had been the superior force that held together the Hellenistic state. The superiority of Greece over the Orient was a view widely held among German humanists of the nineteenth century, and there was perhaps already a precedent in the work of J. J. Winckelmann for seeing Hellenism as revitalizing the moribund culture of Egypt.⁵³ Droysen, however, with the help of Hegelian dialectic, extended the vitality of Greek civilization into the period after Alexander – a period that Hellenists had often neglected, if not despised – by undertaking a broader history of *Hellenismus* soon after the completion of his studies in Berlin.

Droysen’s formulation of *Hellenismus* as both a period of political history and a cultural condition, became especially influential after the revision

⁵¹ Droysen 1893–94: 2.390.

⁵² Droysen 1893–94: 2.368, 390; Bravo 1968: 231–34. The Hegelian notion of the historical *Geist* is implicit in Droysen’s description of the end of the Ptolemaic kingdom, in which history is represented as a process of metempsychosis (1893–94: 2.419–20): “Lagidarum regnum a principio aegrotavit; Philometoris aetate in letale adductum discrimen, ut diversa ista elementa dissolvi, ut quasi anima e corpore Aegyptiaco pro vernaculo migrationum superstitione revocari coepta sit; nam ut historia metempsychosis dei, ita gentes corpora, quas in stationes aliae aliis mentis divinae vices succedant. Lagidarum historiae principio Graeca res, exitio Aegyptiaca praeponderavit. Philometoris regnum vere Graecoegypticum dicas tristem tristioris mixtionis florem.”

⁵³ Bravo 1968: 240–41. Bravo in this context notes that one of the *theses controversae* that Droysen defended at his dissertation examination was that Greek religion is less removed from Christianity than Judaism. Droysen’s choice of Hellenism over Judaism as an historical path to Christianity is, of course, central to Momigliano’s famous study (1970). For the hostility to Egypt in the context of nineteenth-century German Hellenism, see Bernal 1986, which is insightful regardless of the controversies surrounding his subsequent *Black Athena* series. Winckelmann compared Egyptian art to “a tree which, though well cultivated, has been checked and arrested in its growth by a worm, or other casualties; for it remained unchanged, precisely the same, yet without attaining its perfection, until the period when Greek kings held sway over them . . .” He then goes on to say that “the same thing may have happened to [art] as to mythology; for the fables of the Egyptians were seemingly born anew beneath the skies of Greece, and took an entirely different form, and other names.” See Winckelmann 1968: 29, 31.

and republication of his *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, along with the earlier *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* as its first volume in 1877–78, followed by Auguste Bouché-Leclercq’s French translation.⁵⁴ The new research stimulated by this work was, in many ways, conducted along the lines laid out by Droysen. Religion had been a critical element of Droysen’s historical scheme, and there was vigorous study of the syncretisms between Greek and Oriental religious phenomena, exemplified by figures such as Hermann Usener, Franz Cumont, and Richard Reitzenstein. There were also studies of the novel political, social, and economic conditions of the Hellenistic world, now aided by significant advances in papyrology and epigraphy.⁵⁵ If there was a significant departure from Droysen’s original formulation of the Hellenistic period, both immediately after the original publication of *Geschichte des Hellenismus* and in the period of renewed interest in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, it lay in the explicit link that scholars forged between the Hellenistic kingdoms and contemporary colonial empires. Though Droysen referred to the Hellenistic period as the “modern” period of Greek history, he had explicitly disavowed comparisons with European colonialism in the Americas and India. The contemporary significance that he found in this past era was, as I have mentioned, related to his hopes for future German unification.⁵⁶ For other historians of antiquity, however, the concerns of empire were more pressing, and the analogies came more easily. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was an intense intellectual traffic between ancient historians and those more directly entangled in the best intentions and worst anxieties of European and especially British imperialism. Students of ancient empires were often the practitioners and theorists of modern imperialism and colonialism. Lord Cromer not only published his apologetic *Modern Egypt* (1908) after serving there as proconsul, he also went on to write *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (1910) while president of the Classical Association. Cromer described Ptolemy I as “the most successful Imperialist amongst those who seized on the *disjecta membra* of [Alexander’s] vast dominions,” but he

⁵⁴ Droysen 1877–78, 1883–85 (translation by Bouché-Leclercq); see Momigliano 1970: 143–44.

⁵⁵ Momigliano 1970: 151–52; Samuel 1989: 1–4.

⁵⁶ Droysen 1877–78: 3.27–28. The lack of a political interest in comparing the Hellenistic period to contemporary colonial empires is not entirely surprising. Droysen’s main concerns were national rather than imperial. And as Said 1978: 19 points out in regard to German Orientalism, “at no time in German scholarship during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century could a close partnership have developed between Orientalists and a protracted, sustained national interest in the Orient. There was nothing in Germany to correspond to the Anglo-French presence in India, the Levant, North Africa. Moreover, the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly, or at least classical, Orient.”

ultimately saw Rome as the more appropriate subject for his comparative inquiry. Essays comparing the Roman empire and British India were written by Viscount Bryce, the jurist and liberal politician, and by C. P. Lucas, an historian and high-ranking civil servant in the Colonial Office.⁵⁷ Victorians and Edwardians turned again and again to the comparison between Greater Rome and Greater Britain, but Greece and especially fifth-century Athens provided alternative models for the British imperial imagination.⁵⁸ In an age of classicism, high imperialism, and liberal critiques of empire, there also developed a colonial double discourse on Droysen's *Hellenismus*. Alongside positive evaluations of Hellenism as a civilizing force in Egypt and the Near East, there were anxious lamentations of its decline into hybridity through contact with peoples deemed culturally and racially inferior to the classical Greeks.⁵⁹

George Grote, the historian, philosophical radical, and member of parliament, began to publish his monumental, twelve-volume *History of Greece* in 1846, three years after the original publication of Droysen's *Geschichte des Hellenismus*. For him true Hellenism – the period of Greek autonomy and Athenian democracy – came to an end with Alexander, so that is where he ended his history.⁶⁰ The liberal historian did not, however, refrain from passing judgment on the outcome of Alexander's campaigns, nor did he withhold his criticism of Droysen's theories.⁶¹ While the Athenian empire

⁵⁷ Cromer 1910, Bryce 1914, Lucas 1912. On Cromer's classicism in Egypt, see e.g. Reid 1996: 6–8. On the comparativism of Bryce and Lucas, see Majeed 1999: 101–6. On the comparison of Rome and British India, see Vasunia 2005b. On classics and empire at Oxford, see also Symonds 1986: esp. 31–35.

⁵⁸ Jenkins 1980: 331–37. The divide between the white settler colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) and the subject territories and peoples in Asia and Africa was at times understood as a divide between Grecian and Roman elements in the empire. E. A. Freeman, in *Greater Greece and Greater Britain* (1886), compared the relations between Greece and the colonies of Magna Graecia with relations between Britain and settler colonies while criticizing J. R. Seeley's notion of an Anglo-Saxon Imperial Federation (see Vasunia 2005b: 53–54). Some proponents of a "Greater Britain" based on imperial federation, including Seeley, rejected contemporary analogies between ancient and modern empires (see Bell 2006). On Alfred Zimmern and the "Greek Commonwealth" as a model for international relations and especially the League of Nations, see Low 2007: 7–32.

⁵⁹ By "hybridity" I mean here the older sense that had not yet been revalorized in post-colonial thought, on which see the brief comments of Stewart 1999: 44–45. In the subsequent brief account of the formulation of the Hellenistic period in the context of colonialism and imperialism, I shall focus on examples drawn primarily from British historiography. Roughly parallel elements in contemporary continental European scholarship have been discussed by Will 1985 and Heinen 1989.

⁶⁰ The extent to which the closing off of Greek history at this point was a choice conditioned by Grote's modern interests in appropriating the Greek past is brought out very well by K. N. Demetriou's comparison of Grote with the great nineteenth-century Greek national historian Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (Demetriou 2001). Paparrigopoulos's Alexander is more like Droysen's, though his diffusion of Hellenism serves the interest of national continuity.

⁶¹ Though Philip II and Alexander III had been praised by earlier English historians, such as Mitford and Thirlwall, Grote reserved his most direct criticism for Droysen (see e.g. Grote 1846–56: 12.357

was, in Grote's eyes, an ideal vision of beneficent liberal imperialism,⁶² the Hellenistic world that resulted from Alexander's conquests was an image of imperialism gone wrong. Far from a heroic figure systematically diffusing Hellenism for the benefit and improvement of the East, Alexander had, in Grote's opinion, degraded Hellenism through his misunderstanding of and failure to maintain the fundamental boundary between the European and the Asiatic. Grote was particularly concerned with the forms of government appropriate for these two categories, and in laying out these distinctions, he drew an analogy between Aristotle's advice to Alexander and Edmund Burke's speeches on the forms of British government proper for the American colonies and for India:

though the philosopher's full suggestions have not been preserved, yet we are told generally that he recommended Alexander behave to the Greeks as a leader or president, or limited chief – and to the Barbarians (non-Hellenes) as a master; a distinction substantially coinciding with that pointed out by Burke in his speeches at the beginning of the American war, between the principles of government proper to be followed by England in the American colonies, and in British India. No Greek thinker believed the Asiatics to be capable of that free civil polity upon which the march of every Grecian community was based. Aristotle did not wish to degrade the Asiatics below the level to which they had been accustomed, but rather to preserve the Greeks from being degraded to the same level. Now Alexander recognized no such distinction as that drawn by his preceptor. He treated Greeks and Asiatics alike, not by elevating the latter, but by degrading the former. . . . Instead of hellenizing Asia, he was tending to asiatize Macedonia and Hellas.⁶³

Alexander's mistake was to govern Europeans and Orientals as if they were the same. While his despotic rule may have been suitable for Asiatics, it had a detrimental effect on the Greeks: it turned them into Asiatics. The

n. 2; 360 n. 1; 363 n. 2). For an excellent discussion of Grote's criticism of Droysen and its British imperial context, see Vasunia 2007: 96–100. See also Demetriou 2001: 47–48.

⁶² This assessment is most clearly summarized in Grote 1846–56: 8.394–97. For discussion, see also Liddel 2009: 18–19, who observes that in defending Athenian motivations in the acquisition of empire, Grote anticipated J. R. Seeley's famous view in *The Expansion of England* (1883) that the English acquired empire “in a fit of absence of mind”. The earlier role of Edward Bulwer Lytton's Athenian history (1837) in promoting a liberal vision of Athens during the age of reform has been rediscovered recently (see Lytton 2004, and especially the introduction by O. Murray). In the present context, this almost forgotten work is all the more significant and interesting in that Lytton was rather more critical than Grote of the destructive effects of empire on Athenian democracy (see, e.g., Lytton 2004: 458–61, 471, 541–42 and Liddel 2009: 17).

⁶³ Grote 1846–56: 12.358–59. Grote does not give particular citations, but certainly Burke's arguments for extending representation to the American colonies (in his speech *On Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies*, 1775) can be compared to his assertion of a principle of strict subservience in the British government in India (e.g. *Ninth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of India*, 1783).

correct policy would have been democracy at home and empire abroad.⁶⁴ Grote's disdain was not restricted to the political effects of Alexander's conquests. As a counterpoint to Droysen's relatively optimistic picture of Hellenization, he argued that the non-Greek who became familiar with Greek language and culture was an imitation, "not so much a Greek as a foreigner with Grecian speech, exterior varnish and superficial manifestations." The Greeks, on the other hand, really were orientalized in "feelings, judgments and habits of action" and "ceased to be Hellenic." For his interpretation of such a degenerate state of affairs, Grote found support in the opinion of Polybius, who visited the Ptolemaic Egyptian capital of Alexandria sometime in the second reign of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (145–116 BCE): the Greek historian, according to Grote, "looked with surprise and aversion on the Greeks there resident, though they were superior to the non-Hellenic population, whom he considered worthless."⁶⁵ Polybius was indeed hostile to the Alexandrians, but his view does not unequivocally support Grote's assertion, nor can it be simply accepted as fact.⁶⁶ The critical judgment with which Grote had sifted sources to rehabilitate the Sophists and the Athenian empire abandoned him when he found a view that seemed to coincide with his own on the superiority of the classical Greeks over those hybridized versions of the Hellenistic period.

For those historians who accepted Droysen's vision of the continued vitality of Hellenism after Alexander, the picture of cultural and political conditions in Ptolemaic Egypt was far less dire, so long as the Greeks held the upper hand. A few years after the republication of the *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, the Anglo-Irish classicist and historian J. P. Mahaffy shifted his attention from the classical period to pursue pioneering work on Greek social and cultural history in the period from Alexander to the Roman empire.⁶⁷ For Mahaffy, the relevance of this period for contemporary

⁶⁴ Indeed, this was for Grote a defensible policy even within the Greek sphere, at least in the case of Athens. Grote 1846–56: 6.43–62 presents a positive picture of the Athenian empire (at least before it was made harsher by the Peloponnesian War), and J. S. Mill, in his approving review of Grote's history (Mill 1859: 529–34), makes the utilitarian case that the Athenian empire was, despite its wrongs, a great benefit to the Greek world and to all humanity. Note also Vasunia 2007: 100.

⁶⁵ Grote 1846–56: 12.355–56.

⁶⁶ Grote's source is the well-known fragment of Polybius (34.14.6; quoted in Strabo 17.1.12), in which the Greek historian does criticize various elements of the population of Alexandria, including Egyptians, mercenaries, and Greeks. In the passage in question, however, it is not entirely clear whether the Greeks are thought to be "superior to the non-Hellenic population" or superior to the mercenaries (see Walbank 1970–79: 3.629), and nowhere does it say that the Egyptians were "worthless." In any case, Grote seems to take the hostile opinion of Polybius as fact, as have others. See the further discussion below.

⁶⁷ For an account of Mahaffy's life and scholarship, see Stanford and McDowell 1971; on Mahaffy's shift of focus to the Hellenistic period, see in particular 177–92.

problems in Ireland and the rest of the British empire was more than a sufficient defense for spending scholarly labor on a “silver age” of Hellenism. An ardent Unionist and a fierce opponent of efforts to revive Irish language and literature,⁶⁸ he saw Alexander and the Hellenistic age he ushered in as a positive and beneficial step forward for the cause of imperialism over the narrow backwardness of nationalism. Mahaffy’s *Greek Life and Thought from the Age of Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (1887) concludes with a four-page argument for the benefits of imperialism:

I cannot conclude better than by calling the reader’s attention to the prominence in that day of a great problem which is still awaiting its solution in many parts of the world – the problem of the relative claims of imperialism and of nationality to dominate among men. With the rise of Alexander’s empire a great blow was struck in favour of imperialism. Whatever national distinctions remained, the Egyptian, the Syrian, the Phrygian, the Bithynian, felt the glamour of Hellenism, and sought to belong to the great Greek empire of language and of culture. . . . Whatever losses and hardships may have been inflicted on Syrians and Egyptians by the establishment of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires, no one will contend that it would have been better for those nationalities had they followed an isolated path, and had Greek energy and culture not come to the aid of decaying Semite and Hamite life. . . . Let, therefore, separate nationalities subordinate themselves, we might say, to great Hellenistic kingdoms, and seek their higher development not in narrow patriotism, not in the cultivation of nationality as an exclusive principle, but in acceptance of cosmopolitan culture.⁶⁹

Resistance to this benevolent Hellenistic imperialism was no more creditable, in Mahaffy’s eyes, than the opinions of the ungrateful malcontents demanding Home Rule in Ireland. He praised or blamed the cultural policies of Hellenistic kings depending on the extent to which they mollified national sentiment enough to subordinate it to the aims of the more universal state.⁷⁰ In 1899, he contributed an important volume on the Ptolemaic period to a *History of Egypt*, edited by the eminent Egyptologist Sir Flinders Petrie. It is not insignificant that Petrie turned this volume over to a classicist. This period, even to an Egyptologist, was part of Greek history.⁷¹ In this volume of the history, Mahaffy assumed the preeminence of Hellenism, but also took the view that the Ptolemies showed a benevolent interest in

⁶⁸ Stanford and McDowell 1971: 104–26.

⁶⁹ Mahaffy 1887: 575–76. The overt political use of this period did not go unnoticed by contemporaries. See, e.g., the short and biting review of this work by B. L. Gildersleeve (1888), and also Stanford and McDowell 1971: 181–82. Mahaffy’s vision is parallel to Lord Cromer’s paternalistic assertion that the future of modern Egypt lay in an “enlarged cosmopolitanism” rather than the “narrow nationalism” advocated by native Egyptians (as discussed by Said 1978: 37–38).

⁷⁰ Mahaffy 1887: 6, 30–31, 186–88, 288. ⁷¹ As observed by Ritner 1992: 285.

reconciling Egyptian sentiment to their rule. Even if direct analogies to the contemporary colonial situation are relatively few and oblique in this work, it was nevertheless an optimistic vision of monarchy and imperialism put forward by an Anglo-Irish Unionist.⁷²

Mahaffy's volume on Ptolemaic Egypt, and to some extent his earlier imperialist vision of the Hellenistic period, were given an extended life when his history was rewritten by the English historian E. Bevan in 1927. The latter reintroduced into this history a more direct analogy between the history of Ptolemaic Egypt and the colonial empires of his day:

Looking at this period of the history of Egypt as a whole, we can see its main characteristic to be that Egypt has now, instead of the comparatively homogeneous native population which it had under the old Pharaohs, two strata of population living together within its borders – the upper stratum constituted by a European ruling race and the lower stratum constituted by the great subject mass of Egyptians. It was a state of things not altogether unlike that which is found in certain countries to-day, for the civilization of the ruling race in Ptolemaic Egypt was precisely that same Greek civilization which is the parent of the modern civilization of Europe, and their feeling of superiority to the people of the land was not unlike the feeling which “white men” have to-day towards “natives.” Indeed, a word which means “natives” (ἐγχώριοι) was the common one in the mouths of the Greeks when they spoke of Egyptians.⁷³

In an extended comparison between Ptolemaic Egypt and modern colonies, Bevan acknowledges that there were differences as well as similarities. The Greeks settled permanently in Egypt, just as Europeans settled in South Africa, but “the situation is different in so far as the natives of South Africa are primitive people, not, like the Egyptians, representatives of an ancient civilization of which the European immigrants stood in a certain awe.” In this regard, Bevan thought that Ptolemaic Egypt was more like British

⁷² Mahaffy 1899: 10 compares the persistence of the Egyptian element at Alexandria to the Irish character of Dublin despite the impositions of English rule. Later, he compares the practice of double names (Greek and Egyptian) in Ptolemaic Egypt to the conciliation of national sentiment through the adoption of Irish names by the English in seventeenth-century Ireland (1899: 171–72, n. 1). This particular reference may have a personal dimension. In 1899, Mahaffy was ridiculed by Douglas Hyde (eventual first president of the Republic of Ireland) for opposing Irish-language education despite having a name of Gaelic origin. Mahaffy suggested that his English ancestors had adopted the name (Stanford and McDowell 1971: 105–6). His general view could perhaps be summed up in his words on Alexander (Mahaffy 1899: 4): “from the outset, the policy which Alexander marked out for himself was to protect and promote Eastern nationalities, without abating aught from the primacy of the Greeks in culture.” Mahaffy was criticized by Edwyn Bevan and others for his favorable views of Ptolemy IV Philopator and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, both of whom he interpreted as pursuing policies favorable to Egyptians (Bevan 1927: 250–51, 324; Mahaffy 1899: 142–46, 204–5).

⁷³ Bevan 1927: 38.

India, except that the European element there was a transient community of officials, soldiers, and merchants. There were also, generally speaking, fewer barriers between Greeks and Egyptians than between Europeans and Africans or Asians. He mentions the absence of religious differences as well as a lack of any “horror at intermarriage with Egyptian women,” a fact which made closer relations between Greeks and Egyptians possible in a way that was unthinkable for him in the modern situation. Intermarriage even diminished the racial differences between Greeks and Egyptians.⁷⁴ But Bevan never abandoned his confidence in the superiority of the Greek element, nor his conviction that Greek rule, so long as it remained strong, resulted in the general improvement of Egypt.⁷⁵ These were not idle musings in a political vacuum. In an earlier essay on *Indian Nationalism*, a meditation on British imperial policy in India, Bevan had asserted the continuity, whatever the differences in historical detail, between the Hellenism that was spread by Alexander and the rational, European civilization of modern empires. And he expressed a similar sentiment of confidence in the benevolence of that civilization in arguing that British supremacy must be maintained, at least for the moment, in order to ensure the best interests of both India and Britain.⁷⁶

Modern paternalistic paradigms of stewardship and development were often implicit in early twentieth-century views of a benevolent Hellenism, especially in the detailed studies of social and economic life made possible by documentary evidence such as the papyri from Ptolemaic Egypt. The

⁷⁴ Bevan 1927: 86–88. “The distinction between the higher stratum of Greeks and lower stratum of natives did not cease, but it became more a matter of culture and tradition than of physical race” (Bevan 1927: 87). In his response to Lord Cromer’s *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (1910) at a meeting of the Classical Association, Bevan outlined similar differences between ancient and modern attitudes while at the same time affirming the parallel between Greek–Barbarian and European–Oriental oppositions (see Haverfield et al. 1910: 109–11).

⁷⁵ Bevan 1927: 132: “In so far as Egypt is governed by foreigners of Hellenistic culture, Ptolemaic rule is the first chapter of a new epoch, an epoch in which the old Egyptian people has finally lost its freedom – if freedom means that men are governed despotically by rulers of their own race; in so far, on the other hand, as Egypt is governed by rulers who reside in the country – in so far as the kingdom of Egypt is free, in the sense that it is independent of any outside power – Ptolemaic rule is the last chapter of the history of Egypt as a sovereign state . . . Egypt was no longer what it had been in its great days. ‘Its agriculture suffered from years and years of irregular work on the banks and canals – a question of life and death for Egypt; its commerce was almost entirely in the hands of foreigners, both Greeks and Phoenicians; its industry was to a great extent monopolized by the temples and by the clergy, dominant in the political, social, and economic life of the country.’ [quoting Rostovtzeff] Under the Ptolemies Greek brains were brought to bear on the problem how to make the whole land of the Nile a profitably administered state. And the system, as they framed it by degrees, was so successful that it was not only taken over, in its general lines, by Rome, but some remains of it lasted on, through the later Roman empire, into the Mohammedan period.”

⁷⁶ Bevan 1914. See especially 2–5, 13–19.

advent of Hellenism was credited with bringing to the East and to Egypt a rationalized and dynamic economic life, urban growth, and advances in technology.⁷⁷ In an important programmatic lecture delivered at Oxford in 1920, the great social and economic historian M. I. Rostovtzeff put forward two arguments against the notion that the Hellenistic period was one of decline: not only was it the period in which Greek language, thought, and culture were spread, establishing foundations on which European and even world culture could be built; it was also a period in which the Greek genius was responsible for reviving and reforming the decrepit economic and political institutions of the ancient oriental civilizations.⁷⁸ His case in point was Ptolemaic Egypt. The basis of the Ptolemaic economic system remained Oriental, in Rostovtzeff's view, but Greek influence optimized its structures, subjected the Egyptians to "European standards of efficiency," and thereby made the land more productive – even if the aim was ultimately the enrichment of the colonizers. In the process of realizing the productive potential of Egypt through this combination of Greek and Egyptian elements, the Greek element was treated as rational and progressive, while the Egyptian element was the "Oriental" part that tended toward stagnation and decline.⁷⁹ Rostovtzeff's history of the Hellenistic world was a struggle between these two elements, a struggle that the Russian liberal explicitly framed as a very modern choice between economic liberalism and the subordination of the individual to the state. Ptolemaic central planning was clearly the wrong choice, but Hellenism, which Rostovtzeff associated with Western liberalism, could not avoid having a positive influence.⁸⁰

For all the confidence in the benevolent power of Hellenism, the specter of decline was never quite banished from these important early studies of the Hellenistic period and Ptolemaic Egypt. It lurks in the background of every apologetic assertion that this phase of Hellenism was worth studying because of its fundamentally Greek character and because of its continuity with the earlier Greek past.⁸¹ In narratives of Hellenistic political history,

⁷⁷ For discussion, see Samuel 1989: 1–12.

⁷⁸ Rostovtzeff 1920: 161–63; discussed by Ritner 1992: 285–86; cf. Préaux 1947: 7. See also Samuel 1993: 173.

⁷⁹ Rostovtzeff 1920. The same view is found in Rostovtzeff's monumental *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, along with implicit and explicit analogies to modern empires and colonialism (see e.g. 1941: I.v, 1.263–67, 1.273, 1.326, 1.413, 1.421); cf. Préaux 1947: 29: "La phrase d'Apollonios montre comment le grand domaine s'insère dans l'économie royale et quelle harmonie d'intérêts fait collaborer avec le roi les Grecs entreprenants et désireux de s'enrichir. Ainsi fut-il, au Congo, de la collaboration du roi Léopold II et des 'hommes d'affaires'."

⁸⁰ For Rostovtzeff's dual vision of the Hellenistic period, see also Momigliano 1994: 38–42.

⁸¹ E.g. Rostovtzeff 1920: 161: "I take the liberty of affirming that people who know Athens and who are not thoroughly acquainted with Alexandria, Pergamon and Antioch do not know Greece.

however, decline could not be denied, only deferred. No matter how successful the “colonial” project of Hellenism was in its first century or so, the eventual demise of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms required explanation. In the Ptolemaic case, there were multiple causes, including dynastic instability, incessant foreign wars, and economic troubles. But a consistent thread among these causes was the Egyptian resurgence within the Ptolemaic state, both as a nationalistic political force, and in the cultural and racial composition of the population. Most historians followed Polybius in connecting the rebellions that began in the late third century with Egyptian pride at fighting in the army at the battle of Raphia (217 BCE), accepting this as a critical turning point and the beginning of a series of nationalist revolts.⁸² The weakness of the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt after the third century was a concomitant of the Egyptianization or “de-Hellenization” of the ruling dynasty and of the Greeks who had immigrated to Egypt (just as in Droysen’s doctoral dissertation).⁸³

In some works, such as those of the eminent Hellenistic historian W. W. Tarn, the decay of Hellenism in its later phases, both in Egypt and in the Seleucid East, was defined in explicitly racial terms as a consequence of the hybridization of Greeks through intermarriage.⁸⁴ Such speculations were

They cannot fully realize the exceptional work of Greek genius.” In the stratified notion of a “colonial” Egypt, the culture of the upper stratum was the only worthy object of scholarly interest. Momigliano 1977: 320 notes: “In that vigorous survey of Hellenistic history which is the first volume of *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* (1924), Wilamowitz presented Hellenistic culture as the imperialistic achievement of Greek conquerors.”

⁸² Polyb. 5.107.1–3. See, e.g., Bevan 1927: 220, 237–39 (less pronounced in Mahaffy 1899: 135); Ros-tovtzeff 1941: 1.69, 2.706–11 (who also notes the contributing factors of economic and social conditions).

⁸³ For “de-Hellenization” see Bell 1922: 145–47, 155. See also Tarn and Griffith 1952: 206–7 in addition to the references in the previous note.

⁸⁴ Tarn and Griffith 1952: 5 (first published 1927): “I myself venture to entertain considerable doubts whether the true Greek, the racial aristocracy of the Aegean, really degenerated. . . . Much which at first sight looks like decline can be accounted for by two general considerations. One is the steady diminution in the number of true Greeks after c. 200, combined with the intrusion, or admixture, of alien stocks, which, whatever their latent capabilities, often had not at the time the intellectual, political, or social energy of the Greek.” This theory, which seeks to protect the “true” Greeks from decline by imputing anything that looks like decline to those of mixed racial background, is discussed more extensively in Tarn 1938: 34–39. See also Pierre Jouguet (citing the linguistic and racial views of Ernest Renan) on the decline of Greeks in the Egyptian *chora*: “Ils lisent et écrivent le grec: ils l’ont appris dans Homère et les classiques; mais ils l’écrivent de plus en plus incorrectement. On suit cet abâtardissement de la langue, signe très claire de celui des esprits, en parcourant dans l’ordre des dates les nombreux documents conservés. . . . On a pu parler de la deshellénisation des Grecs d’Égypte. Pourtant, à la réflexion, ce qui est surtout étonnant, c’est que cette deshellénisation ne se soit pas produite plus vite. ‘Le fils d’une Orientale et d’un Européen est un Oriental’, dit Renan, et l’on sait ce qui arrive d’ordinaire à une race immigrée, même conquérante, quand elle se mêle à celle du pays où elle vient s’établir” (Jouguet 1961: 398; originally published 1926). On Renan’s Orientalist philology and racism, see Said 1978: 130–48. It is important to note that although the idea of decline through hybridity was current in the ancient world (Isaac 2004: 110–48), these ideas were absorbed from ancient texts and naturalized in the context of racial ideologies.

contemporary with the wider practice of imperial comparison mentioned earlier, a comparativism in which past empires (especially Rome) were used to confront modern colonial anxieties about “the colour question” and about the consequences of assimilation and racial mixture. Contrasts with the perceived absence of racial boundaries in ancient empires (which, after all, declined and fell) reinforced modern structures of racial difference.⁸⁵ In histories of the Hellenistic period, theories of the degradation of Greek colonial stock when mixed with foreign blood were not limited to the early twentieth century; they continued well into the post-war period.⁸⁶ The monumental study of *Ptolemaic Alexandria* published in 1972 by P. M. Fraser, another eminent Hellenistic historian, is devoted primarily to the literary and intellectual production of the Alexandrian Greeks, but it opens with a social history of the city’s third-century golden age and subsequent decline. This social history could as well be called a racial history: Alexandrian decline is attributed to intermarriage and miscegenation between Greeks and Egyptians.⁸⁷ Like his predecessors, Fraser followed Polybius in attributing the sliding fortunes of the Ptolemaic kingdom at home and abroad to the nationalistic resurgence after the battle of Raphia. In Alexandria, however, the city’s descent into frequent mob violence was, according to Fraser, a direct outcome of racial fusion rather than antagonism: “the two classes – the urban Egyptian (perhaps including those of good family) and the lower class Greek – merged increasingly, to produce the hybrid mob which dominated events in the last century of Ptolemaic Alexandria.” In the absence of solid evidence, assumed hierarchies of both race and class drive the narrative.⁸⁸ Fraser tied the decline of social and intellectual life at Alexandria to the city’s Egyptianization after 217:

⁸⁵ See the discussion of Bryce, Lucas and Cromer in Majeed 1999: 100–6; see also Vasunia 2005b: 47, 51–52. On the side of scholarly historiography, M. P. Nilsson 1926: 360–66, for example, attributed the decline of Imperial Rome directly to “unchecked mongrelising.”

⁸⁶ In addition to the example of Fraser discussed below, see also Launey 1987 (originally published 1951), as discussed in the “Postface” by Yvon Garlan, Philippe Gauthier, and Claude Orrieux.

⁸⁷ For the broad outlines of this scheme, see Fraser 1972: 1.51, 60–62.

⁸⁸ Fraser 1972: 1.81–82. Though acknowledging the lack of evidence for “unprivileged” Greeks, Fraser was quite certain that it was these lower classes who first mingled and intermarried with Egyptians and produced the violent mob at Alexandria (see also Fraser 1972: 1.51, 1.73). Egyptians, however, appear to be the bad apples that spoil the barrel. Commenting on Polybius’ account of the brutal murder of Agathocles in the events following the palace coup and assassination of Ptolemy IV Philopator, Fraser attributed all sorts of bestiality and cannibalism to the “natives.” “Polybius,” Fraser wrote (1972: 1.82), “describes the perpetrators of this crime in vague terms as ‘the inhabitants of Egypt’, but it cannot be doubted that he means the native Egyptians.” This judgment carries over into the Roman period, when mob violence had become “inherent in the character of the Egyptianized population of the city.” Fraser 1972: 1.800; cf. the comments of Ritner 1992: 288. On the production of race and class in the modern colonial context and the role of sexual relations in both, see Stoler 2002.

We may summarize briefly the significance of this vital but obscure period in the history of Alexandria by saying that in it the immigrant Greek element, particularly the intelligentsia, largely disappeared, and that with its eclipse the creative period, derived from the old sources of Greek creative activity, is over. . . . The long process of the Egyptianization of [Alexandria's citizen] body can be seen in a number of ways which collectively testify to a gradual but complete change in the social structure of Alexandria; from being a Greek polis with a large foreign population, the city came to consist of a mixed and inferior society . . .

As in Grote's earlier account of Ptolemaic degeneration, the critical passage is the fragment of Polybius (34.14.6; cited in Strabo 17.1.12), in which the Greek historian, from his Greek perspective, attempts to make sense of a complex and violent situation by analyzing the population into Egyptians, mercenaries, and Alexandrian Greeks of a mixed background (*μιγάδες*), all of whom he censures to varying degrees. Fraser, like many others, adopted Polybius' ancient hostile opinion on the mixed second-century Alexandrian population as an historical explanation, and transformed it into a modern narrative of hybridization and decline.⁸⁹

The histories of Ptolemaic Egypt that I have been describing are histories of a colonizing power. They are not histories of Egypt, but histories of Hellenism in Egypt.⁹⁰ They assume the voice of the colonizer – not only

⁸⁹ Though Polybius is, without a doubt, extremely critical of the Alexandrian population in this passage, it should be pointed out that it is very difficult to see degeneration through racial hybridization as Polybius' primary concern here (see the connections made by Fraser 1972: 1.51, 73, 75–76, 81–82, 85, 89). Indeed, Fraser himself ultimately decided that "Polybius' sketch of Alexandria at this time seems not only incomplete in more than one way, but also, by its failure to indicate clearly the increasing Egyptianization of society, positively misleading" (Fraser 1972: 83). In Polybius, blame for Alexandria's state is placed on certain qualities of the Egyptians and the mercenaries, the weakness of the kings, and on the *obliteration* of the mixed Alexandrian population by Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (145–116 BCE). The Alexandrians, in Polybius' view, were "also not distinctly inclined to political life" (οὐδ' αὐτὸ εὐκρινῶς πολιτικόν), but they were better than the others (i.e., the mercenaries and the Egyptians), since "even though a mixed people, still they were Greeks by origin and mindful of the customs common to the Greeks" (καὶ γὰρ εἰ μιγάδες, Ἕλληνας ὁμῶς ἀνέκασθεν ἦσαν καὶ ἐμμένοντο τοῦ κοινοῦ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἔθους). It seems that culture trumps race in this passage of Polybius. The characteristics of the various groups and what effect they are thought to have had on Alexandria are also difficult to decipher. For example, a considerable quantity of ink has been spilled over the question of whether Polybius could have applied the epithet *πολιτικόν* to the Egyptians in a positive sense. Fraser 1972: 1.61, 2.144–45 nn. 183–84 thinks it is improbable; likewise Walbank 1970–79: 3.629 and 1979: 182, though he seems to be more open to the idea. For opposing views, see Ritner 1992: 287–88 and Yoyotte, Charvet, and Gompertz 1997: 96–98. Numerous other discussions are cited in these works. Fraser's views must, of course, be understood in their context. For a discussion of Oxonian colonial attitudes towards race that shaped the archaeological studies of Greek colonization, see de Angelis 1998: 543–44. On Oxford, empire, and race more generally, see, e.g., Symonds 1986: 25–26, 76–77, 299–300.

⁹⁰ Cf. Fanon 1963: 41: "The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother-country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country

in identifying with Hellenism as the ancestor of modern European culture, but also in speaking with what H. Bhabha has called the “forked tongue” of colonial discourse on the West’s civilizing mission in Asia and Africa: the Hellenization of the East and Egypt is an achievement of Graeco-Macedonian imperialism, but also cause for policing the boundaries of “true” Hellenism; the celebratory history of the diffusion of Hellenism goes hand in hand with a counter-narrative of deferred but inevitable hybridization and decay.⁹¹ Though rarely recognized, the earliest reactions against these colonial histories can be traced to Egyptian scholars such as Ibrahim Noshy, who were trained at European universities,⁹² but it was not until the post-war period of decolonization that this countercurrent began among European scholars themselves. This reaction unfolded gradually and at first without deliberate and explicit critique of the way that the history of Hellenism had been framed by colonial conceptions of race, culture, and the civilizing mission. In the wider context of decolonization, European humanism, which professed to have its foundations in classical Greek civilization, had become subject to a searching critique, exemplified by Frantz Fanon’s 1961 work *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁹³ But European historians of the Hellenistic period shifted views in a far less radical way and at a slower pace. There certainly were anti-colonialist European classicists in

which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves.”

⁹¹ On the synchronic version of this dual discourse, a tension between British professions of a mission to reform the other and the simultaneous anxiety about maintaining marks of distinction between self and other, see Bhabha 1994: 85–92 and the discussion in Young 1990: 141–56. On the narrative version of this discourse, see, e.g., Young’s discussion (1995: 178) of C. L. Temple’s *Native Races and Their Rulers* (1918).

⁹² In his study, *The Arts of Ptolemaic Egypt* (1937), Ibrahim Noshy emphasizes Egyptian national pride and resentment of exploitation and domination by the Ptolemies (see esp. 11). He also argues that separation between Greeks and Egyptians led to an Egyptian racial and cultural continuity, and that any “de-Hellenization” of Greeks was not the result of fusion with Egypt, but rather due to environment and social conditions (14–15, 146). In 1949, Muhammad Awad Husayn published *Harakat al-Muqawima al-Wataniyya fi Misr al-Batalimiyya* (The movement of national resistance in Ptolemaic Egypt). On these authors and their context, see Reid 1996: 14–18.

⁹³ Fanon wrote of the decolonization of the colonized native intellectual, in whose mind “you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal” (1963: 37). Note also these words from J.-P. Sartre’s preface to this work (Fanon 1963: 7): “The European élite undertook to manufacture a native élite . . . From Paris, from London, from Amsterdam we would utter the words ‘Parthenon! Brotherhood!’ and somewhere in Africa or Asia lips would open ‘ . . . thenon! . . . therhood!’ It was the golden age. It came to an end; the mouths opened by themselves; the yellow and black voices still spoke of our humanism but only to reproach us with our inhumanity. . . . We did not doubt but that they would accept our ideals, since they accused us of not being faithful to them. Then, indeed, Europe could believe in her mission; she had hellenized the Asians; she had created a new breed, the Greco-Latin Negroes.” For discussion of these two texts, originally published in 1961, as a founding moment in the decolonization of European thought, see Young 1990: 119–22.

this period: the principled example of Pierre Vidal-Naquet stands out. And credit is due to the pioneering effort of S. K. Eddy, who, in 1961, took on the task of writing a history of Near Eastern resistance to Hellenism.⁹⁴ But despite such intellectual efforts and individual stands, the decolonization of Hellenistic historiography proceeded slowly.

Momigliano delivered his lectures on *Alien Wisdom* in 1973–74 in the context of changing views on the Hellenistic period, and his critical position on the limitations of Greek knowledge of other cultures was a major part of this transformation.⁹⁵ Even in excluding Egypt, he not only looked back to an earlier historiography of Hellenism, he also looked forward. Momigliano may have characterized native Egyptian culture in Ptolemaic Egypt as representing “an inferior stratum of the population,” but he also set Egypt aside because of doubts over whether Egyptians and Greeks could engage in any meaningful communication. This justification was part of an emerging critique of Droysen’s vision of wide-ranging Hellenization and the cultural fusion of nations, as well as doubts about the civilizing mission of European colonialism. Momigliano cited C. Préaux’s opinion on the “hermetic” character of the Egyptian language, and it was the latter’s work, especially in *Le monde hellénistique* (1978), that developed an influential view in which the Hellenization of the Near East and Egypt was much more limited and Greeks and other peoples coexisted, each group preserving and maintaining its own language and cultural traditions.⁹⁶ Reacting

⁹⁴ Vidal-Naquet, outside of the fields of Classics and Ancient History, is best known for his principled opposition to the Algerian War and his protests over the use of torture by the French army in that conflict, a subject on which he also wrote (see e.g. Vidal-Naquet 1972, originally published in English in 1963). Though primarily working in other areas, Vidal-Naquet did complete a study of the Ptolemaic Egyptian sowing schedule, which briefly questions the appropriateness of a notion of “development” in the Ptolemaic Egyptian economy (1967: 11), but there is no reference to a colonial framework. Despite some shortcomings, the work of S. K. Eddy (1961) is an important first attempt to write a history of the reactions of various non-Greek peoples to Graeco-Macedonian imperialism from their cultural and religious perspectives, and Eddy does draw parallels with the history of more recent struggles against imperialism (1961: 339–40). Oswyn Murray’s scathing review (1969) of C. Schneider’s *Kulturgeschichte des Hellenismus* could also be mentioned along with some comments by Momigliano (1970: 152–53) that suggest a critical awareness of the historiographical problem. The critique of empire and colonialism by classicists was not, of course, limited to the period during and after decolonization. On Gilbert Murray’s criticism of empire, see Symonds 1986: 91–93.

⁹⁵ See also Momigliano 1975b. Similar comments on the “fault of the Greeks” in not learning other languages were made by Edwyn Bevan in response to Cromer’s *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (Haverfield et al. 1910: 111).

⁹⁶ Préaux 1978: 1.5 explicitly states the object of her history as a challenge to Droysen’s theory of cultural fusion. Her separatism is partly organized along the division between urban (Greek) culture and the persistence of native culture in more rural areas. Préaux at this point also understood how the idealized image of the European colonial mission had influenced the assessment of the Ptolemaic economy that she had formed before decolonization (*L’économie royale des Lagides*, published 1939).

against the syncretism associated with Droysen's *Hellenismus*, several scholars followed Préaux in emphasizing a "separatist" view of Ptolemaic Egypt in which Greeks and Egyptians lived side by side with a minimum of cultural interaction – the Greeks largely in urban settlements, and the Egyptians in the countryside.⁹⁷ Though decolonization was part of the historical context of this reevaluation, it is perhaps no coincidence that the "separatist" formulation was elaborated primarily by scholars working in Belgium and Canada, at a time of political debate and conflict in both countries over the status of their two major linguistic-ethnic groups and the possibility of political separation.⁹⁸ Borrowing the title of Hugh MacLennan's novel of French–English relations in Canada, Alan Samuel referred to the two cultures of Ptolemaic Egypt as "two solitudes,"⁹⁹ and argued that the cultural and social conservatism of the Greeks prevented them from adopting indigenous Egyptian culture in any significant way. Hellenization was likewise a very limited phenomenon in an Egyptian population that largely stuck to its own traditions.¹⁰⁰ Taken broadly, the history of Ptolemaic Egypt was no longer characterized by Hellenization or hybridity, but by the independent persistence of two ancient civilizations, one ruling and the other ruled.

In the wake of decolonization, moreover, the assumed benevolence of the Ptolemaic administration of Egypt did not square with a greater acknowledgment of the often brutal realities of modern colonial rule. The Ptolemaic management of the Egyptian economy could no longer be seen as a rational and centrally planned system aiming at economic development and improvements in overall productivity; it was reinterpreted as an *ad hoc* system intended to maximize the extraction of revenues needed for the

See Préaux 1978: 1.380 and the discussion by Will 1985: 281 and Orrieux 1985: 27. The idea of separate cultures, however, had been worked out long before *Le monde hellénistique*. See, e.g., Préaux 1958: 213: "Cette civilisation n'est pas, dans son ensemble, une civilisation mixte. L'Égypte millénaire des champs et des temples vit de sa vie millénaire sous les Ptolémées. Les institutions grecques, de leur côté évoluent lentement sur le lancer des idéaux formés dans la cité. Et cette séparation – fruit de la force des traditions et du manque d'imagination – explique la tardive floraison dans la renaissance copte d'une souche égyptienne restée intacte dans la classe sociale qui n'eût point part à la culture grecque."

⁹⁷ In addition to the works of Claire Préaux, Alan Samuel, Édouard Will, and Joseph Mélèze-Modrzejewski cited elsewhere, see Lewis 1986: 1–36, Green 1990: 312–35. This is not, of course, an exhaustive list.

⁹⁸ This was astutely observed by La'da 2003: 163. According to Orrieux (1985: 27), Préaux, in retracting her earlier positions on the more or less benevolent state-directed economy of the Ptolemies, was in part attempting to undo the results of an "unconscious colonialism."

⁹⁹ Samuel 1989: 35–49.

¹⁰⁰ In addition to the preceding reference, see Samuel 1983. This idea of Greek conservatism was also argued by Préaux 1978: 2.550 and Préaux 1958.

pursuit of foreign wars.¹⁰¹ The instability and revolts of the second and first centuries BCE were less likely to be charged to the decline of Hellenism and the rise of Egyptian influence, and more likely to be attributed to tensions between Greeks and Egyptians and especially Egyptian resentment at economic exploitation by an oppressive fiscal bureaucracy. This gradual change in perspectives on the Hellenistic period and Ptolemaic Egypt was eventually put in an explicitly post-colonial interpretative frame by Édouard Will in a 1985 essay that called for an “anthropologie coloniale” of the Hellenistic world. Will offered a critique of the Eurocentric civilizing narrative of earlier political and economic histories, and proposed drawing on studies in the colonial sociology of Africa in order to compare indigenous reactions to Greek rule in the Hellenistic period with analyses of active or passive acceptance and resistance in the modern context.¹⁰² In this comparative perspective, the interaction between Greeks and Egyptians was important, but the possibilities for intercultural communication and its consequences were limited to certain “fringes of copenetration,” marginal zones between the two separate civilizations, which were mostly occupied by the small number of Egyptian élites who assimilated to the dominant culture and collaborated with the Ptolemaic government.¹⁰³

In roughly the same period that this new orthodoxy of separatism was developing, there was also an efflorescence of Egyptological scholarship in Demotic, the latest form of the Egyptian language that is of fundamental importance for understanding documentary and literary evidence of the later periods of Egyptian history, including the Ptolemaic era. These later ages had been (and still are in some Egyptological quarters) considered a decadent and adulterated form of Egyptian civilization because of the advent of foreign political and cultural influence. The idea of cultural separatism, for some scholars at least, legitimated the study of Late Period

¹⁰¹ See Turner 1984, as well as the modifications proposed by Samuel 1993. For discussion of these models and a more recent reassessment of the economic power of the Ptolemaic state, see Manning 2003: 3–12, 21–24, 130–80.

¹⁰² Will 1985. His critique focuses on the work of K. J. Beloch and M. I. Rostovtzeff. In an earlier lecture (Will 1979), he set out his views of the potential fruitfulness of comparisons between the modern colonial world and the Hellenistic world, but without a critique of the colonial ideologies of earlier histories.

¹⁰³ See Will 1985: 284. For the phrase “franges de compénétration” see Will 1979: 86–87; cf. Méléze-Modrzejewski 1983: 255, who writes: “En fin de compte, la fusion n’atteint que des groupes limités – ‘franges de compénétration’, comme les appelle Éd. Will – élites indigènes hellénisées d’une part, certains Grecs absorbés par le milieu local d’autre part. L’importance de ces franges pour l’étude de la société coloniale dans l’Égypte Hellénistique est considérable; elle n’en constituent pas moins un phénomène marginal.” Bingen 1981 likewise limited interaction to narrow and relatively insignificant zones of interaction.

Egyptian language and culture as a continuation of the earlier and more celebrated classical periods of Egyptian civilization.¹⁰⁴ A separatist model that encouraged some scholars to view each culture as independent and vital in its own terms was also reinforced by a disciplinary separatism, in which Egyptologists studied the Egyptian civilization of Ptolemaic Egypt and Classicists studied the Greek civilization. For some Classicists in the late 1980s and 1990s, resistance to the idea of any external influences on Greek culture became even more urgent owing to the controversy over Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* series. Bernal's work focused on much earlier periods of contact between Greece and Egypt (primarily the Late Bronze Age), so his arguments for the Afroasiatic roots of classical civilization have little to do with the historiography of the Hellenistic period. Nevertheless, his polemics against the discipline of Classics excited a reactionary response and a general retrenchment of cultural boundaries among those Classicists who wished to defend the primacy and purity of Greek civilization. This controversy, owing to its fierceness and the broad interest it attracted both within and beyond Classics, became the general political context (especially in North America) for any discussion about historical relations between Greece, Egypt, and the Near East.¹⁰⁵ At times, disciplinary divides and failures of communication between scholars invested in cultural-national visions of their proper fields of study have hampered the development of integrated approaches to questions of cultural interaction, influence, and exchange.¹⁰⁶

There have also, however, been important exceptions to this pattern in scholarship on Ptolemaic Egypt, and scholars working with both the Greek and Egyptian evidence or in multi-disciplinary collaborative

¹⁰⁴ On the parallel tendencies in both Classical Studies and Egyptology toward a biological vision of decline and anxieties over cultural purity in the later periods of Greek and Egyptian civilization, see Heinen 1989: 122–35. See also Ritner 1992: 284–85. The tendency among some scholars of Demotic literature in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt to resist the idea of Hellenization is noted by Thissen 1999: 370–71.

¹⁰⁵ Bernal 1987–2006. For the reactionary response, see e.g. Lefkowitz 1996 (a counter-polemic funded by the Bradley Foundation and the John M. Olin Foundation), which despite the insistence on “standards” contains several historical inaccuracies of its own. My observation that this debate has often formed the general political context for any discussion of Greek–Egyptian or Greek–Near Eastern contact is based on my own experiences in discussing my work with Classicists and historians over the last few years. Whatever my topic, I have been asked where I stand on Bernal. Occasionally, the question has been posed as if it were a litmus test of the kind normally reserved for U.S. Supreme Court nominees. I shall gladly continue to answer that question, but it is too large and too peripheral a topic to treat in any detail here. Let it suffice for me to say that despite serious reservations about his historical work, I have profited from his study of modern scholarship.

¹⁰⁶ The specific problems of disciplinary separation as relevant to Ptolemaic Egypt are noted by Bagnall (1995: 49–50), Clarysse (1992: 55–56), Manning (2003: 12 and 2005: 163), among others.

partnerships have over the last couple of decades gradually brought to light or reanalyzed evidence that calls into question some of the assumptions supporting the separatist model. This work has, for example, shown that the “fringes of copenetration” were wider and more consequential than has often been imagined by adherents of the separatist model. Careful study of the phenomenon of individuals who originated in a mixed or Egyptian social milieu, but who adopted Greek names for use in the Ptolemaic army and administration, where the dominant language and culture was Greek, has suggested that there were more Egyptians in these “Greek” domains than previously thought.¹⁰⁷ Investigation of hieroglyphic evidence has also endeavored to shed light on the presence of Egyptians at court and in the Ptolemaic government in the third century BCE, when this presence was thought to be non-existent or negligible.¹⁰⁸ Other studies have also revealed the adaptation of Greeks to life in Egyptian social contexts as well as evidence of the adoption of dual Greek–Egyptian identities among some individuals who had official Greek status.¹⁰⁹ Ethnic identifications in Ptolemaic Egypt have also been studied more carefully, and the result has been a challenge to the notion of systematic and institutionalized ethnic discrimination that is sometimes implicit in the separatist model.¹¹⁰ Along with earlier reassessments of Greek economic domination and rationalization, the integration of Demotic evidence into studies of the Ptolemaic economy has given a more varied and realistic picture of the limits of state power, a picture in which earlier Egyptian economic institutions (e.g. land tenure) continued under the Ptolemies and were gradually integrated into the state. It is also a picture in which interacting and overlapping Greek and Egyptian social networks were important factors both for the development of

¹⁰⁷ See Clarysse 1985, who was responding to earlier prosopographical studies of ethnicity and onomastics by Peremans (1970, 1971, 1973). See also Blasius 2001.

¹⁰⁸ Derchain 2000, though note the review of Guerneur 2003a. See also Huss 1994a, Lloyd 2002 and Gorre 2009a.

¹⁰⁹ Dorothy Thompson’s work on the archive related to Ptolemaios, son of Glaukias and his kin provides a wonderful evocation of Greeks in a predominantly Egyptian milieu (Thompson 1987 and 1988: 212–65). See also Clarysse 1992 as well as the debate over the ethnic identities of the individuals represented in the Dryton archive (the contents are conveniently summarized in Lewis 1986: 88–103); see also Ritner 1984 and 1992: 289 and Vanderpe 2002.

¹¹⁰ La’da 2003. See also the earlier studies of ethnicity by Goudriaan 1988. The most widely discussed evidence of an “ethnic” policy was the tax break provided to Hellenes, teachers of Greek, athletic coaches and actors. This was a policy preferential to Greek culture, and those of Greek status, but it is important to note that some Egyptians attained the tax status of Hellenes, and those benefiting from the tax break for teachers included Egyptians who taught Greek. This was, in other words, not quite systematic ethnic discrimination nor a widespread effort at imposing Greek language and culture. It was a policy intended to promote Greek and to help provide a supply of literate individuals (including Egyptians) for the new administration. For discussion, see Thompson 1994 and Clarysse and Thompson 2006: 124–47.

the Ptolemaic economy and for its limitations.¹¹¹ These reassessments have spurred continued debate over whether the major revolts against Ptolemaic rule that began at the end of the third century BCE were fundamentally “nationalist” in character.¹¹² Many questions about the degrees and modes of interaction remain open, but all this research and debate has made it entirely inadequate to describe Greeks and Egyptians within Ptolemaic Egypt as “two solitudes.”

Concomitant with this reevaluation of social relations, a growing body of scholarship has challenged separation, mutual incomprehension, and mistrust as the sole determining factors in the intellectual and cultural confrontation (or lack thereof) between Greeks and Egyptians in the Hellenistic period. Momigliano’s argument that no significant interaction could take place because of the language barrier – an assertion often reiterated¹¹³ – is untenable. The linguistic obstacles were real, but not insurmountable. Some bilingual Egyptians, especially those serving in the Ptolemaic administration, could and did write Greek, and it was probably these individuals who were responsible for translating Egyptian texts into Greek. Examples of narrative literature such as the *Dream of Nectanebo*, now attested in both a Demotic original as well as the Greek, were translated in the Ptolemaic period. Some translations of Egyptian stories known through Roman-period manuscripts may well have been composed earlier, along with other forms of Egyptian literature that were translated or composed in Greek in the Ptolemaic period.¹¹⁴ Secondly, there is indeed evidence of people who considered themselves Greek in ethnicity, or at least legal status, and yet used Demotic Egyptian legal instruments, and very likely spoke Egyptian.¹¹⁵ Evidence for these bilingual individuals often comes from

¹¹¹ Manning 2003, 2005, 2007.

¹¹² Most recently, see McGing 1997, Veisse 2004 and the review of the latter by McGing 2006. The evidence of the “resistance” and “collaboration” of Egyptian priests has also been studied from quite a different perspective by Werner Huss, who considers the problem in rather anachronistic and inappropriate terms as a struggle between “church” and “state” (Huss 1994b). See the review by Billows 1997.

¹¹³ E.g. Samuel 1983 and 1989; Green 1990: 313–17.

¹¹⁴ On the *Dream of Nectanebo*, see now Gauger 2002; Ryholt 1998 and 2002. For an overview of Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian literature in the Hellenistic period, see Dieleman and Moyer 2010. Evidence from early Roman period archives suggests that members of the indigenous Egyptian élite who lived in the towns and villages of the countryside possessed both Greek and Egyptian literary texts. See Van Minnen 1998.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, the Dryton archive (noted above) as well as the archive of Dionysios the son of Kephalas, head of a mixed family, who is competent in both Greek and Demotic (Lewis 1986: 124–39; for the texts of this archive, see now Vandorpe 2002). There is also the well-known Ptolemaic letter from a woman who is learning Egyptian in order to teach it to Greek slave boys who are learning Egyptian medical techniques (see Rémondon 1964 but with the critique of Bagnall 1995: 33–35). Apollonios and his brother Ptolemaios (son of Glaukias) possessed texts in both Greek and

modest towns in the Egyptian countryside, where Greek settlers would have found complete social and cultural isolation difficult to maintain. But even at the highest political levels, communication between cultural and intellectual traditions could hardly be avoided. The Ptolemaic dynasty, some have argued, ruled over a kingdom with “two faces,” and presented itself in both Greek and Egyptian terms. But royal self-presentation was not always a question of either/or, as illustrated by conscious and deliberate efforts to harmonize certain Greek and Egyptian ideals of kingship in projecting an image of legitimate power.¹¹⁶ The presence of bilingual indigenous élites at the Ptolemaic court would have facilitated this cultural rapprochement and communication. Such studies and new analyses have modified the picture of separation and impermeability between cultures gradually and with relatively little controversy. Far more resistance confronts those scholars who have argued that the high Greek culture of Ptolemaic Egypt may have been in contact with, or even affected by, its Egyptian context. Vigorous debate and sometimes fierce denials have greeted attempts to explore a dual poetics, capable of sustaining both Greek and Egyptian readings, in Alexandrian poetry.¹¹⁷ Criticism of these approaches often rests, at least in part, on doubts as to whether Greek poets and their readers, endowed with feelings of cultural difference and superiority, were sufficiently aware of Egyptian culture to make or understand Egyptian allusions, and whether they were even interested in doing so.¹¹⁸ When the question of Egyptian influence on Hellenism arises, the model of separatism persists tenaciously, sometimes buttressed by approximating Greek attitudes to those of modern Europeans in colonial situations of cultural conflict and incomprehension.¹¹⁹ It is an ironic legacy of the post-colonial reappraisal of the civilizing narrative of Hellenization that this separatist model can be used to defend the boundaries and cultural purity of Hellenism.¹²⁰

Demotic. Apollonios appears to have been bilingual. For overviews, see Lewis 1986: 69–87 and Thompson 1987 and 1988: 212–65.

¹¹⁶ Koenen 1993; on the dual nature of the Egyptian kingdom: Peremans 1987; Clarysse 1991.

¹¹⁷ This scholarship is hardly a recent or marginal phenomenon: Koenen 1977, 1983, 1993, Merkelbach 1981, Gelzer 1982, Mineur 1984, Bing 1988, Selden 1998, Stephens 2003.

¹¹⁸ See, e.g., Zanker 1989 and Goldhill 2005.

¹¹⁹ Note especially Goldhill 2005: 101–2, who insists on strong cultural boundaries between Greek and Egyptian culture and the inherent implausibility of Susan Stephens’ work on dual Greek–Egyptian poetics by appealing to “common sense” assumptions about British cultural incomprehension of India.

¹²⁰ In his own analysis of the limitations of past and current approaches to cross-cultural interaction in Ptolemaic Egypt, Ritner (1992: 287) has suggested the trajectory of theories of cultural separation: “Old concepts of cultural synthesis or subjugation are giving way to theories of cultural separation.

In some cases, however, post-colonial sensitivities have made a more fruitful contribution to the scholarship on Hellenistic Egypt. A few scholars have suggested more sophisticated comparisons with colonial regimes, urging a critical position in applying models of domination and resistance drawn from modern post-colonial theory to the social and economic history of Ptolemaic Egypt. Roger Bagnall, for example, has offered a valuable critique of the consequences of pursuing Édouard Will's "anthropologie coloniale" in the Hellenistic world.¹²¹ In addition to remarking on fundamental economic and ideological differences between the practices of domination familiar from modern colonialism and those of the Hellenistic world, he argues that Will's categorization of modes of indigenous response to the social and economic forces of "colonization" in terms of active or passive collaboration and resistance actually imposes artificial limits on the range of responses to be imagined. These limits derive from the fact that within the theoretical framework applied the responses are viewed solely from the perspective of the colonizing power, and he adds the astute observation that "it may not even be excessive to describe the model as being itself a typical product of European attempts to exercise intellectual control over the colonial situation."¹²² Bagnall, nevertheless, goes on to suggest that historians interpreting the social and economic history of Ptolemaic Egypt through its wealth of documentary materials would benefit from familiarity with the array of counter-hegemonic responses to colonial rule explored in post-colonial criticism and literature, while constantly maintaining a cautious, critical and truly comparative approach.¹²³ Given the long-standing imbrication of colonial ideologies and scholarship on "Hellenistic culture" outlined above, scholars interpreting cultural and intellectual interactions between Greeks and Egyptians and the development of discourses on Egypt in the Hellenistic world must be similarly cautious about writing Egyptians into a subordinate, colonized role.

While this separation should perhaps please everyone, allowing Greek and Egyptian culture to be 'vital' independently, I fear that it can be taken too far and am suspicious of the underlying motives in *overstressing* the absence of interaction, and wonder whether cultural 'vitality' is again confused with cultural purity." It is also worth noting once again that Ritner applies many of the same criticisms to scholars in the field of Egyptology, who at times express an aversion for the decadent, mixed culture of the Late Period of Egyptian history. See also Heinen 1989: 110–11, who notes that the reaction against the concept of a *Mischkultur* sometimes risks insisting too much on the opacity of the cultural systems of Graeco-Roman Egypt, a move which perhaps unintentionally aligns with the theories of Spengler and Toynbee on "closed" civilizations.

¹²¹ Will 1985, discussed by Bagnall 1995: 101–6 and 1997.

¹²² Bagnall 1997: 229. Bagnall 1997: 235–36 also takes issue with Barbara Anagnostou-Canas' uncritical imposition of a colonial model on Ptolemaic Egypt (Anagnostou-Canas 1989/1990, 1992, 1994). Other applications of the colonial model include Orrieux 1985 and Litvinenko 1997.

¹²³ Bagnall 1997: 237–41.

In order to avoid (re-)colonizing Egypt in this way, the present work explores the roles of Egyptian subjects in the so-called “fringes of copenetration” where Greek discourses on Egyptian history and culture were created. The preeminent mediators on the Egyptian side of these borderlands were the indigenous cultural and literary élite: the priestly class. These studies, therefore, will focus on reconstructing what Egyptian priests did and said in a series of encounters with Greek culture, and what the actions and representations of Egyptian priests contributed to such exchanges. To this end, I historicize these encounters not only according to Greek historical, political, or intellectual interests, but also according to ideas and motivations recoverable from the Egyptian archive of texts and representations available to the subjects of this study. The attempt to recover an Egyptian subject and this subject’s role in various histories raises the question of my own critical position. Given the sources available and my formal education in the traditional Western disciplines of Classics and Egyptology, I am not able, in any disingenuously simple way, to allow “the subaltern” to speak.¹²⁴ Rather, I am questioning the understanding of these Egyptians as subaltern, whether uncritically, in early scholarship on Greek–Egyptian interaction, or critically, in the application of models drawn from recent colonial experiences. Egyptian priests, as the élite within Egyptian civilization, cannot, in any case, be categorized as subaltern with any confidence; if one were to push the analogy, they would (both in the Ptolemaic era and under Persian domination) be more like the “modernizing élites” of colonial and post-colonial states.¹²⁵ But my point is that such analogies, and the ones I have described above, constantly run the risk of placing Egyptians at the margins of someone else’s historical narrative, as objects of Greek (i.e. European) representation, or, alternatively, of admitting these Egyptians to the historical plot only as collaborators and assimilators in a story that is really about the dominant power and its discourses. In other words, the Egyptian priests who are the subjects of my studies are only subaltern in as much as they are almost always embedded in narratives and theories whose “sovereign subject” is the same imaginary, hyper-real Europe that

¹²⁴ This would be impossible in Gayatri Spivak’s vision of the absolute hegemony of colonial discourse in any Western attempt to represent the subaltern (Spivak 1988). Note Benita Parry’s critique (1987) of the approaches to discourse analysis practiced by Spivak and Homi Bhabha. Drawing on the model of Frantz Fanon, she urges a dialogical approach and a conception of the native as the historical subject of an oppositional discourse.

¹²⁵ In the Ptolemaic period in particular, as I have noted above, Egyptian élites did form part of the state, and contributed to the formation of hegemonic discourses of Graeco-Egyptian kingship, so it would be a confusion of Gramsci’s terminology to label them “subaltern” (see e.g. Gramsci 1971: xiii–xiv, 52–55, 206–9), except in the special sense I note below in drawing on Chakrabarty.

Dipesh Chakrabarty has observed in modern colonial and post-colonial histories of India. Chakrabarty, of course, interrogates a range of modern categories, theories and historicist assumptions that are beyond the scope of this work, but in evoking the double-bind of a European thought that is “indispensable but inadequate” he articulates a general problem that confronts any attempt to find an alternative to the analogies I have been describing. It would be impossible to carry out the task I have set for myself without a whole series of concepts (culture, identity, agency, etc.) that have been generated out of the European intellectual tradition. On the other hand, it is possible, as a number of recent works have shown, to take a self-conscious, critical position toward the relationship between colonial and imperial ideologies and the modern study of antiquity, even from within the tradition.¹²⁶ With that in mind, my aim is to decenter (or “provincialize”) the European subject of this tradition, to make visible the consequences of assimilating histories of Greek–Egyptian relations to modern Western narratives, and to entertain the possibility of reading against as well as with the grain of such analogies, in the hope of discovering the “subaltern histories” that lie beyond their limits.¹²⁷ This work, therefore, is not despairingly deconstructive; by critiquing monological models of a Greek hegemony over Egypt, my intention is to follow inspirations found in a heterogeneous group of historians and anthropologists who have reconfigured relations between Europe and its others as dialogical and transactional.¹²⁸

Approached in this way, each particular case study opens up new micro-histories of Egyptian–Greek interaction that will serve to complicate the terms in which larger stories are told. This is especially so since the texts at

¹²⁶ To cite just a few examples: de Angelis 1998, Rose 1999, Hingley 2000, Lyons and Papadopoulos 2002, Humphreys 2004: 8–50, Goff 2005, Hurst and Owen 2005, Liddel 2009.

¹²⁷ Chakrabarty 1992 and 2008: 3–46, 97–113.

¹²⁸ The approach I take in this work was initially guided by Marshall Sahlins’ dictum that “one cannot do good history, not even contemporary history, without regard for ideas, actions, and ontologies that are not and never were our own” (Sahlins 1995: 14). Clifford 1988 has provided me with insights into the collaborative and dialogical modes of ethnography developed by various anthropologists (starting with Leiris 1966: 125–56). Chakrabarty (2008: 97–113) also evokes a dialogical mode in imagining subaltern pasts as a present possibility with which the historian can engage. As Sheldon Pollock has aptly put it, “We needn’t any longer bemoan the impossibility of knowing the past or learning from it. What we do need are new pasts to know, with their potentially new lessons” (Pollock 2006: 176). Denning 1988 is a brilliant example of this kind of dialogical history in practice. The present work is not meant to be a reconstruction based on a utopian view of Greek and Egyptian agents interacting with one another on the basis of free will and equality (a charge leveled (perhaps unfairly) at Clifford’s vision of dialogical ethnography by O’Hanlon and Washbrook 1992: 158–67). I think it will be clear that in the studies I undertake I remain conscious of political contexts and the exercise of power.

the heart of these case studies each have rich histories of their own in various streams of modern Western scholarship. They have been used as privileged examples or emblematic instances in a number of narratives and theories about the ancient world. These include not only the fields framed by the historiographical problems just described, but also a range of related issues in scholarship on Hellenistic or pre-Hellenistic civilization: among them, the nature of historical consciousness and the emergence of historiography, Hellenistic literary genres, the history of Hellenistic religions, the concept of syncretism, and ancient discourses of identity and authority. Since, in every study, the central texts are in Greek (though in two cases the authors are Egyptians), the histories of their interpretation have unfolded primarily in the discipline of Classics, and the related humanistic study of Hellenistic religions. These disciplines, as a result, are the ones with which my historiographical critiques are engaged. The fundamental basis of these critiques, however, comes from my use of evidence derived from Egyptian texts, ordinarily the purview of Egyptology. In this approach, in this attempt to disturb the boundaries beyond which lie certain meaningful omissions, these studies also touch on the wider questions of where and why traditional humanistic disciplines have drawn their limits. In that regard, my interest, both scholarly and to some extent political, lies in furthering the growing overlap and interpenetration of scholarly disciplines, and pushing forward the reflexive self-critical process of reevaluating the disciplinary uses of the ancient past.

THE PLAN OF THIS BOOK: SOURCES AND HISTORIES

In my pursuit of the “subaltern histories” mentioned above, I begin at a beginning: the first report in Greek literature of what would become a long series of meetings between Greeks and Egyptian priests. In the second book of his *Histories*, Herodotus tells the story of Hecataeus of Miletus, who once had a conversation with certain priests at Thebes and compared genealogical traditions with them. The Ionian scholar, according to Herodotus, proudly recounted his entire lineage back until he reached a god in the sixteenth generation and, therefore, the mythical beginning of all things. The Egyptian priests, however, considered this impossible, and showed Hecataeus 345 statues, which they claimed represented a continuous lineage of high priests, each son inheriting the office from his father, and each one a man and not a god. Herodotus says that he also met with the Egyptian priests in Thebes, and was shown these same statues, though he did not

repeat Hecataeus' misguided genealogical performance. This episode dramatically portrays the confrontation of the Greeks with the brevity of their own chronological traditions in relation to the long human past of Egyptian civilization. As Vidal-Naquet remarked, Egypt in this encounter is for the Greek historian the paradigm of human time, as opposed to the mythical time of gods and heroes.¹²⁹ This story is often told and retold within the frame of Greek cultural and intellectual categories, on the assumption that its historical significance lies in the ethnographical uses to which Greeks put their own fantastical visions of an almost incomprehensible Egyptian antiquity. But Egyptians also shaped this moment. Herodotus and Hecataeus met the priests at Thebes at a time when conquest and domination by the Persian empire had ended a period of pharaonic revival and renaissance under the Saïte dynasty. At this time, Egyptian priests, for reasons of their own, were engaged in the intensive cultivation of links to Egypt's human historical past, links evident both in a well-attested tradition of extensive priestly genealogies and in wider patterns of archaism. Herodotus seems to have been deeply impressed by the Late Period Egyptian consciousness of the past, and the impact of priestly representations of this phenomenon cannot be isolated from the metahistorical work Herodotus carries out in his second book – work which became fundamental to the formation of Western historiographical traditions. By setting the Egyptian voices of Herodotus' text in their historical context, this originary moment in Western historiography and ethnography emerges as far more heterogeneous and dialogical than has been imagined.

The encounter between Greek and Egyptian ways of representing the past continued into the Hellenistic period, but took a radically different form in the subject of my second study: Manetho of Sebennytus, an Egyptian priest who wrote the *Aegyptiaca*, a history of Egypt in the Greek language. Manetho's efforts to translate his own traditions into Greek under the patronage of the early Ptolemaic court put him at the nexus of profound intellectual, cultural and political confrontations that are held to characterize the Hellenistic period. A native priest, adept in the Egyptian learning of a centuries-old scribal tradition, could now engage directly with Greek representations of Egypt in Herodotus or Hecataeus of Abdera, but also use Egyptian documents and knowledge to create a history of Egypt. Unraveling the significance of this watershed moment in Greek and Egyptian intellectual history, however, requires a direct confrontation with the terms of Droysen's *Hellenismus*, and the limits that its world-historical scheme

¹²⁹ Vidal-Naquet 1986: 45.

has imposed on Manetho in subsequent scholarship. Manetho has been interpreted as an emblem of the arrival in Egypt of true history in the form of Greek civilization and the influences of Greek historiography. He may have drawn on the native sources at his disposal as an Egyptian priest, but the formal dimensions, the methods, structures and narrative techniques he used to fashion his history, are assumed to be predominantly Greek. This figure of the first Egyptian historian, however, excludes the possibility of understanding the *Aegyptiaca* in terms of the indigenous Egyptian historiographical concepts that Manetho not only used but also tried to explain in his work. The complexity of Manetho's historiographical project can be revealed by setting his work alongside traditional antecedents, such as the Egyptian king-list, and more contemporary Egyptian productions, such as the *Demotic Chronicle*. Though his position as a mediator between cultures and as an advisor at the Ptolemaic court has suggested to some the image of an indigenous intellectual assimilating to the civilization of a "colonial" power, the work that Manetho presented to the Ptolemies was a counter-discursive historiography firmly rooted in his own creative exegesis of Egyptian ways of representing the past.

The second half of this work then turns from the role of Egyptians in shaping both Greek and Egyptian histories to examining changes and continuities in the way Egyptian priests constituted their own authority, identity and authenticity in the novel developments and transformations of Egyptian religion in the Hellenistic period. Manetho was known in antiquity for another contribution to the Greek–Egyptian dialogue at the Ptolemaic court: assisting in the formation of the cult of Sarapis. According to a story recorded by Plutarch, Manetho and Timotheus, an exegete of the Eleusinian mysteries, were on hand to advise Ptolemy I Soter on the identity of an image from Sinope which was to become the iconographic basis of the Hellenistic cult of Sarapis. The Egyptian origins of the god in the Memphite cult of Oserapis (*Wsr-Hp*) are clear enough, but the status of the new divinity as a mixed confection of cultural and religious elements formed at the Ptolemaic court has made the cult of Sarapis an exemplary member of the contested category of *syncretism* in Hellenistic religions. In the case of Sarapis, as in most cases, syncretism is not a neutral term, but one which may presume asymmetrical relations of power and agency, or carry the taint of impurity and inauthenticity. The syncretism of Sarapis is conventionally understood as the Hellenization of an Egyptian god, a process of deracination and acculturation that served as the necessary precondition for the diffusion and acceptance of Sarapis beyond Egypt's borders. This overlooks, however, the hermeneutical debate and strategies of

authentication and cultural affiliation that form the continuing life of syncretistic religious phenomena. To explore these contesting interpretations, I turn in my third study to the rich documentation of the cult of Sarapis on the island of Delos, the sacred birthplace of Apollo in the midst of the Greek Cyclades. Many inscriptions were erected in honor of the Egyptian gods on Delos, among them an aretalogy, or hymn of praise, dedicated to Sarapis in the late third or early second century BCE. The inscription chronicles the foundation of the temple in which the inscription was found, the history of its hereditary priests who trace their origins to Memphis in Egypt, and the miraculous intervention of the god on behalf of the priests in a lawsuit brought against them. With its dual literary connections to both the canonical Greek poetry of Homer and diaspora versions of Egyptian literary genres and Osirian myth, this remarkable text provides surprising insights into the discourses of identity, legitimacy, and authority that the Egyptian priests of a supposedly “syncretistic” cult used in their political and religious struggles, and it casts new light on the wider history of the Sarapis cult on Delos.

In the final study, I turn to the Egyptian priest as he came to appear against the background of later Hellenism under the Roman empire: a powerful figure of secret wisdom, and extraordinary powers. I approach this figure through a text that is perhaps not widely known, but whose significance has long been recognized by historians of religion and students of Graeco-Egyptian magic: a work on astrological botany attributed to the Greek physician Thessalos. In an epistolary prologue addressed to the Roman emperor, Thessalos tells the marvelous tale of his quest for magical knowledge, and the successful result he obtained through the help of an Egyptian priest in the ancient city of Thebes. This is among the earliest extant accounts of Egyptian priests as sources of magical wisdom, and so it has intrinsic interest for the formation of this image in the Graeco-Roman world of Late Antiquity. Since Thessalos’ search ends with a divine revelation procured through the Egyptian priest’s ritual techniques, the autobiographical narrative also provides evidence of the changing modes of religious practice and authority that some Egyptian priests adopted under the social and economic pressures of Roman rule in Egypt. The primary purpose of Thessalos’ prologue, however, was to endow the treatise with authority, and this authority is enmeshed with Thessalos’ relationship to the priest, and to Egyptian authoritative discourses. His quest was originally precipitated by the discovery of a book of remedies written by the pharaoh Nechepso, a king of the Saïte dynasty around whom indigenous Egyptian literati created a Graeco-Egyptian tradition of astrological and magical

wisdom. In portraying this quest, Thessalos appropriates this royal tradition of astrological and magical wisdom and creates an authoritative persona with profound consequences not only for the value of his treatise, but also for the figure of the Egyptian priest. Yet even in a clear case of cultural appropriation aided and abetted by contemporary political domination, it is possible to find the deeper, transcultural histories that lie behind exoticized wisdom.

Each of these studies centers on a brief episode in Greek–Egyptian interaction, each at a particular historical moment and in a particular political, social and cultural setting. This work, as a result, is in no way a continuous narrative, but rather a history in fragments. It takes this form because it is an attempt not only to contend with the limitations of various scholarly approaches to the evidence, but also the limitations of the evidence itself. These particular documents, though fragmentary or poorly preserved in some cases, are among the few sources in which cultural relations between Greeks and Egyptians can be discerned as transactional and dialogical processes, so I have tried to present a thorough account both of their previous interpretations, and of the further histories they can reveal. To that end, I have also introduced additional evidence, both Greek and Egyptian, into each dossier so that through this material each moment can be connected to a series of longer, overlapping and interconnected histories. These histories are many and various. Herodotus' journey to Thebes took place in the intellectual ferment of the Greek classical age. Athens was at the height of its imperial power, while Egypt had been a province of the Achaemenid Persian empire for about a century. The story I tell, however, reaches back to an earlier era when the Saïte dynasty of pharaohs ruled Egypt in a period of renewed independence and self-assertion, and Greeks from micro-states on the fringes of larger territorial empires made their way to Egypt to seek trade, employment, and knowledge. The stories of Manetho and the Egyptian priests on Delos unfold in the middle of the third century BCE and at the beginning of the second in vastly different contexts, both occasioned by the novel conditions of the Hellenistic period: the kingdom and court of the Ptolemies in Egypt, and a small, independent Greek city-state where a few Egyptians lived in diaspora. By the time of Thessalos' magical adventures, more than a century had passed since the defeat of Antony and Cleopatra had ended the Ptolemaic dynasty and brought Roman rule to Egypt. And yet the secret wisdom that Thessalos discovered and presented to the Roman emperor was the product of a long history of intellectual exchanges, stretching back as early as the Saïte period. All the political periods and spaces that I have just enumerated

provide the vital “big picture” of incessant flows of people, things, and ideas between Egypt, the Near East, and the Mediterranean during the eight or so centuries that these studies cover, but they do not themselves provide the central threads of this book. The core subjects that I intend to follow – Egyptians and Greeks and their dialogue over time – must be found in a mobile, changeable middle ground at the conjuncture of multiple histories and historicities, Greek and Egyptian, ancient and modern. The stories that follow are brief snapshots and glimpses from which I hope it will be possible to reconstruct a different kind of history.

CHAPTER I

Herodotus and an Egyptian mirage

At some time near the end of the sixth century BCE, Hecataeus of Miletus paid a visit to Egypt in the course of his extensive travels around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. There, as Herodotus reports, the logographer and genealogist had a celebrated encounter with certain Theban priests. When Hecataeus recited his genealogy and traced his descent back to a god in the sixteenth generation, the Egyptian priests refuted the Greek's assertion of such recent divine ancestry by showing him 345 wooden statues, each set up by a high priest in his lifetime. The images represented an unbroken lineage of sons succeeding to their father's office, each of whom was a man not a god. Herodotus, too, claims he was shown these same images, though he had wisely refrained from reciting his genealogy.¹

This anecdote is the critical beginning of a Greek tradition on the knowledge of Egyptian priests – a knowledge which derives from the vast antiquity of Egyptian civilization, and is preserved through the records of a long-standing written culture. In this episode, Herodotus constructs a scene in which Greek traditions on the past are trumped by an Egyptian priest, vividly conveying the infancy of Greek civilization in the face of Egypt's great antiquity. This anecdote has also been critical in modern scholarly constructions of the relationship between Greek civilization and Egyptian. Some have seen it as a decisive moment in the intellectual biographies of the early Greek historians, others an attractive and useful fiction. The way these reconstructions figure the relationship between the Greek intellectual

This chapter is a revised and expanded version of my earlier study on Herodotus and the genealogies of the Theban priests (Moyer 2002).

¹ Hdt. 2.143. Questions of the “reality” of the Greek historians' visits to Egypt and their citations of Egyptian priests have long been debated. For a brief discussion, see below. I believe it is probable, but not provable with absolute certainty, that both Hecataeus and Herodotus went to Egypt, though this is not essential to the argument that follows. Far more important is the fact that one or both of them had reliable information concerning Late Period Egyptian priests' understanding of their genealogical past whether through their own researches or someone else's. My concern, in other words, is not so much with the historicity of the meeting, but with the historicities that met.

and the Egyptian priest often mirrors deeper assumptions concerning the relative agency of Greeks and “barbarians” in Classical scholarship. The scene has generally been construed as a confrontation in which the young, dynamic and creative Greeks construct an image of the static, ossified and incredibly old culture of the Egyptians. But the civilization that Herodotus confronted both physically while travelling and intellectually in his long excursus on Egypt was not an abstract, eternal Egypt, a mirage invented solely by the Greeks for their own cultural purposes. Rather, it was the Egypt of his own day, at a specific historical moment; it was living Egyptians in a particular setting with a particular understanding of their own long history. The meeting of Herodotus and the Egyptian priests was, in other words, a confronting between different temporalities and different historicities.²

In this chapter, I shall argue that in the second book of the *Histories*, an ethnographical discourse on Egypt through which Herodotus explores constructions of past time, the Egyptian priests and their relation to the past have considerable authority. This authority has profound consequences not only for the status of the Egyptian priest in subsequent Greek discourse, but also more widely for Greek historiography. First, I shall in very broad terms review the place of Herodotus’ anecdote in scholarship on early Greek ethnography and historiography, and argue for an approach that considers the agency of Egyptian priests as representatives of their culture in imagining this encounter. The second part considers the Greek historians’ appeal to the authority of Egyptian priests against the background of prior Greek discourse on Egypt, and the profile of Egyptian priests in the Late Period within and outside Egypt. Then I shall lay out evidence for the archaizing culture of Late Period Egypt as it relates to Herodotus’ account of the episode of the Theban priests, with particular attention to priestly genealogies. Finally, I shall show how Herodotus uses the Late Period Egyptian consciousness of the past in order to critique Greek mythical and genealogical notions, and develop a basis for Greek identity in the human, historical past.

APPROACHING THE MIRAGE

In studies of early Greek historiography, this brief passage has had special significance for reconstructing the relationship of Hecataeus and Herodotus to one another, and to their sources on the Egyptian past. Some have seen

² The sense in which I understand “historicity” and “historicities” is articulated by Hirsch and Stewart 2005 (see n. 29 below).

in this episode a relatively unproblematic instance of the mind-broadening effects of travel, and a salutary step forward in the development of Greek historiography. J. B. Bury, for example, saw Hecataeus' Egyptian voyage as a stimulus to his skepticism about Greek traditions on the past.³ Felix Jacoby, likewise, considered Hecataeus' meeting with the Egyptian priests a "psychological impetus" to a systematic revision of the Greek historical tradition, but put limits on the impact that barbarian traditions could have on Greek intellectual history. The impulse was only psychological after all, and its effects were ultimately limited to theology, rather than true historical thought.⁴ For Herodotus' intellectual development, Jacoby granted even less influence to the long human past of the Egyptians. Only Athens was a sufficient crucible for the extraordinary transformation of Herodotus from mere ethnographer to the historian (or at least *Erzähler*) of the Persian wars.⁵ In this analysis, the ethnographical inquiries and the results of Herodotus' own confrontation with the Egyptian priests are subordinate to, if not quite separate from, the true historical narrative of the later books. Ethnography is only a prelude to history, and the traditions of other

³ Bury 1909: 13–14: "We shall then see that his skepticism in regard to the ancient history of the Greeks had been stimulated by the acquaintance he made in Egypt with the historical traditions of the Egyptians. There he made the discovery that in days when the gods were supposed to be walking abroad on the hills and in the vales of Hellas, Egypt at the distance of a few days' voyage was managed exclusively by mere human beings." See also Bury 1926: 520. Earlier, Wiedemann 1890: 21–22 had also commented on the impression Egypt's antiquity would have made upon a Greek. Miller 1965: 109–10 described the confrontation of Greek and Egyptian notions of the past as a spur to the invention of Greek chronography. Vidal-Naquet 1986: 45 noted the "immense perspective" granted by the encounter. Froidefond 1971: 137, 146, 169 associated the anecdote with the "discovery of historical time," though he was more concerned with the development of the "Egyptian mirage" (see further below). Lateiner 1989: 150 has also remarked sensibly on Herodotus' perception of the Egyptian past: "The temporal and cultural perspective that Herodotus gained from the Egyptians allows him to criticize more limited views . . ." West 1991: 146, 152 admits the power of this encounter for the imagination, even if it never really happened. See below for further discussion of her views.

⁴ Jacoby 1912: 2740–41: "Es ist unverkennbar, daß eine Szene wie die von Herod. II.143 geschilderte auf H. einen ungeheuren Eindruck machen mußte, daß sie vielleicht sogar erst den psychologischen Anstoß gegeben hat zu einer systematischen Bearbeitung der 'historischen' Überlieferung der Griechen." Jacoby then goes on to argue that the only real effect of this confrontation was the idea that the Greek gods came from Egypt, that Heracles was a man, and so forth, summing up his assessment of "Eastern influence" in this episode: "Die barbarische Tradition hat hier nichts qualitativ geändert, weil sie, wie wir wissen, wie H. nicht wußte, ja von der hellenischen nicht unabhängig, sondern nur eine Zurechtmachung jener *in maiorem Orientis gloriam* war."

⁵ Jacoby 1913: 355: "In Mutterlande vollzog sich in H. eine innere Wandlung. . . . Das ethnographische Interesse trat zurück, das rein historische in den Vordergrund. Aus dem Reisenden wurde der Historiker des Perserkrieges oder zunächst der Erzähler vom Perserkriege. Daß dann unser Werk entstehen konnte, daß H. nun alles, was er besaß, in einer großen Kontext brachte, dazu war noch ein Faktor nötig – Athen." This is the reverse of the position taken earlier by Bauer 1878: 46–48, who argued that the second book was written later, after Herodotus had acquired a more rational and enlightened view of Greek tradition through his travels in Egypt. For criticism of the Athenocentrism of Jacoby and others, see Thomas 2000: 10–16.

cultures regarding the past have a limited effect on Greek historiographical thought. This conventional limit put on the impact of the Egyptian past on Hecataeus and Herodotus and Greek historiographical thought in general was summed up in the *Cambridge Ancient History*: “The knowledge that they were a young people, faced with a land whose civilization went back thousands of years, gave the Greeks a sense of proportion. Egyptian wisdom had nothing better to give.”⁶

There has, of course, been much discussion over whether Herodotus or Hecataeus (or both or neither) ever really went to Egypt to acquire this sense of proportion. W. A. Heidel argued that the story of the priests and their statues was a convenient fiction told in a witty, ironical manner by Hecataeus, but then believed and twisted to Hecataeus’ discredit by a Herodotus who was not only gullible but malicious.⁷ More recent critics of Herodotus’ sources and credibility have argued that the later historian was the one who invented the story. Far from an inspirational moment in Greek historiography, Detlev Fehling made the story of the Theban priests one of Herodotus’ “demonstrably false source-citations.”⁸ By holding the ancient Greek historian to anachronistic standards of accuracy and punctilious citation, Fehling renders Herodotus’ story a complete fabrication.⁹ Stephanie West deploys the same arguments to dispute the truth of the tale, considering it no more historical than the meeting between Solon and Croesus – another year abroad in the traditional biography of a Greek wise man.¹⁰ Since they never went there, Hecataeus and Herodotus were certainly never affected in any way by the Egyptian view of the past.¹¹

⁶ Braun 1982: 55. See also Momigliano 1990: 32–34, who is not so dismissive of the Egyptians, but does focus primarily on the chronological perspective that they gave Hecataeus.

⁷ Heidel 1935: *passim* portrays Hecataeus as a sophisticated wit, and Herodotus as a malicious dullard who is pinching his references from the earlier historian whenever he mentions priests. Hecataeus, in turn, was using the Egyptian priests as fictive spokesmen in order to deflect any criticism from his views on Greek mythical traditions. See especially 59–60, 63, 66, 69, 77, 83, 93–94, 113, 117, 119, 129, 132, 134.

⁸ Fehling 1989: 77–84.

⁹ Fehling 1989: 80 insists that Herodotus has falsified the story, because “the statement about the long succession of arch-priests cannot be other than objectively false.” His logic fails him utterly when he also insists that Hecataeus and Herodotus cannot be reporting a long-standing local tradition because if it were such, it would have to be true. He also argues (1989: 81) that Herodotus cannot have got the story from Hecataeus, because he doesn’t cite the author’s written work in the same way he does at 6.137.1. Other specific arguments are discussed below.

¹⁰ West 1991: 152–54; Pritchett 1993: 187–90 only addresses one aspect of West’s argument, i.e. that Herodotus could not have got the story of Hecataeus from the Theban priests because they could not have remembered it. This argument was raised previously by Brown 1965: 67 n. 36. For discussion of other specific arguments, see below.

¹¹ West 1991: 146 n. 12 shows a little hostility to the idea: “The sobriety of Greek legend compared with Egyptian renders somewhat ironic the picture of Hecataeus inspired to demythologization as he sat musing among the departed glories of Karnak.”

These arguments, to be fair, are not really aimed at addressing this point. Rather, they come in the context of explorations of source citation and the rhetoric of authority in Greek “scientific” discourse. Such arguments over the authenticity of Herodotus’ autopsy, however, have been criticized as “futile and infertile,”¹² since they depend on verifying the accuracy of his claims on the basis of external evidence. Thus posed, the question of Herodotus’ methods and their place in the development of western historiography boils down to whether or not Herodotus got this or that detail about Egypt (or another land or culture) correct.¹³

Some scholars have rejected these externally oriented approaches and have chosen to focus on the internal coherence of Herodotus’ ethnography within the context of his audience’s cultural expectations, considering the way in which Herodotus constructs “the other” according to Greek categories of thought and modes of representation. F. Hartog’s *Miroir d’Hérodote* has been most influential in formulating this mode of reading.¹⁴ In the case of Egypt, however, Hartog was anticipated to a certain degree by Christian Froidefond, who devoted a chapter to analyzing Herodotus’ part in constructing *le mirage égyptien*.¹⁵ Froidefond argued that Herodotus’ account of the confrontation with extensive Theban genealogies, and with the vast extent of the Egyptian past more generally, contributed essential qualities to the “Egyptian mirage” in Greek literature: the great antiquity of the land and its civilization; the static endurance of its customs. In Egypt, according to Froidefond, Ionian thought found “un reflet de la jeunesse du monde,” a temporal terrain in which to conduct its various speculations, whether in natural sciences, chronology, or ethnography.¹⁶ In the last case, Froidefond seems to understand Herodotus as an early modern ethnographer, bringing intellectual order and systematization to the cultural phenomena of a “primitive” society.¹⁷

Hartog is more explicit and also more critical in his application of the ethnographical analogy to Herodotus’ work of othering in the *Histories*. In *Le Miroir d’Hérodote*, Hartog draws analogies between Herodotus’ ethnography (especially of Scythia) and the Brazilian travel writings of Jean de

¹² Cartledge 2002: 73. Cf. the criticisms of Thomas 2000: 8–9, who seeks to situate Herodotus in his cultural and intellectual milieu, and assess his arguments and methods on that basis.

¹³ Hartog 1988: 3–6 argues against an externally oriented approach, which poses questions such as, “Is Herodotus a trustworthy and complete source of information about the Scythians?”

¹⁴ Hartog 1980, 1988.

¹⁵ Froidefond 1971: 115–207; note especially 123–36, in which he discusses inversion, abstraction, and systematization in Herodotus’ account of Egypt.

¹⁶ Froidefond 1971: 145.

¹⁷ This is especially so when Froidefond discusses Herodotus’ treatment of Egyptian religion. Froidefond 1971: 193, 200–1.

Léry in order to clarify Herodotus' methods of representing otherness.¹⁸ He argues that the historian's lengthy ethnographic descriptions tell us more about Greek self-definition than about the cultures he describes, since he presents their customs through a rhetoric of alterity and a grid of oppositional definitions determined by Greek social, political, and cultural concerns. Other cultures, viewed in the mirror of Herodotus, are used to work out a reflexive discourse on Greekness. Though he does not directly examine the episode of the Theban priests in *Le Miroir d'Hérodote*, he does remark elsewhere, in terms similar to Froidefond's, on the privileged position of Egypt in Greek thought: "For a Greek intellectual, to travel in Egypt was to go back in time and catch a glimpse of how it all began; to collect stories about the beginnings of civilized life in general or this or that cultural practice in particular, and to hold forth with verisimilitude on these matters."¹⁹ Egyptian civilization is frozen in time, like the "primitive societies" of early modern ethnography, and excellent material with which to think. But does this approach to Herodotus' ethnography hold up as well in the case of Egypt as it seems to in Hartog's treatment of the Scythian material in Book 4?²⁰ Does the Greek encounter with Egyptian antiquity, so vividly depicted in the anecdote of Hecataeus and the Theban priests, result in such a self-confident ordering and classification of the cultural raw material provided by the other? Is the Egyptian mirage solely a product of Herodotus' grid of Greek categories?

By analyzing the text of Herodotus to elucidate the cultural poetics at work in translating the other into comprehensible categories, some scholars have indeed brilliantly illuminated aspects of Greek thought and

¹⁸ Herodotus' Scythian ethnography is the main focus of Hartog's analysis, but the comparisons to Jean de Léry come in the second part of his book, in which he outlines Herodotus' rhetoric of alterity and his authoritative discourse of seeing and hearing (see esp. Hartog 1980: 225–316). Hartog's comparison is informed in part by Michel de Certeau's examination of the representation of the other in J. de Léry's 1578 *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* (de Certeau 1988: 209–43).

¹⁹ Hartog 2001: 47. The French runs as follows: "Voyager en Égypte signifiera pour un intellectuel grec remonter le temps et entrevoir les commencements, pouvoir recueillir un récit ou tenir un discours vraisemblable sur les débuts de la vie civilisée en général ou de telle ou telle pratique culturelle" (Hartog 1996: 55; see also Hartog 1986). Vasunia 2001: 115–16 adopts a similar approach to Herodotus' construction of Egyptian temporality, arguing that Herodotus' narrative "consistently archaizes Egypt and denies it coevality." This approach, however, denies the agency of Egyptian priests in representing their own historical traditions. Vasunia 2001: 129–31 acknowledges aspects of Egyptian historical awareness, but stops short of attributing elements of Herodotus' discourse to the cultural motivations of his informants, the Egyptian priests. My arguments against this approach follow below. See also the introductory chapter of the present work.

²⁰ The idea of Herodotus' Scythians as solely a product of the historian's ethnographical methods has also been criticized by scholars who would like the relationship between Herodotus and the material he handles to be seen in more dialectical terms. See, e.g., Lincoln 1987.

self-definition, but the way in which they historicize Herodotus' text privileges the Greek mind as the only producer of significant meaning, rendering the other a passive object, a static screen for Greek projections.²¹ In order to respond to this imbalance in agency in the encounter between Herodotus and other cultures as it is represented by the model of Hartog, I propose a revision of the ethnographical analogy employed in interpreting Herodotus. Agency in the analysis of cultural contact was also at issue in a dispute between the anthropologists Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere over the events surrounding the apparent deification and subsequent death of the explorer Captain Cook at the hands of Hawaiians in 1779. Obeyesekere has charged that Sahlins' ethnographical account of the Hawaiian reaction to Captain Cook continues a Western imperialist myth about "natives" that portrays them as unable to distinguish between white men and gods ("they," unlike "us," are irrational – so goes the myth). Marshall Sahlins, however, in a spirited defense of his work, entitled *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook for Example*, has shown how this critical position regarding the role of the ethnographer in creating myths about the culture and thought of "natives" ironically suppresses the native voice and agency. In this case, Sahlins shows that the deification of Captain Cook is not, in fact, a mere myth of Western superiority to the "primitive" mentality of natives, but the outcome of an historical encounter determined by Cook's entanglement in indigenous mythic and calendrical structures. In other words, Captain Cook's apotheosis is not purely the product of a dominant Western discourse about the nature of supposedly irrational native thought, but an historical event shaped by Hawaiian culture and agency. Sahlins' overall intention in this defense of his methodology is "to suggest that one cannot do good history, not even contemporary history, without regard for ideas, actions, and ontologies that are not and never were our own."²²

²¹ This lop-sided division of intellectual labour mirrors a propensity among certain Classical historians and archaeologists for placing the agency in cultural interactions between Greeks and others squarely on the side of Hellenic culture. Walter Burkert, e.g., notes the scholarly strategy of focusing on the "creative transformation" by Greeks of Near Eastern culture (1992: 7). In archaeological studies of Greek colonization in the west, for example, non-Greek culture areas in which Greek pottery is found are said to have been *Hellenized*. On the other hand, Greeks found in possession of Near Eastern and Egyptian artistic motifs, or trade goods, are said to be *Orientalizing*. These habits of thought perpetuate a dichotomy commonly encountered in Classical scholarship between dynamic Greeks and static barbarians. On this point, see Dietler 1989, 1998. On the broader colonial and imperial context of this work see de Angelis 1998 and Snodgrass 2005. John Boardman has borne the brunt of much of the criticism of this approach, and he has responded (2002).

²² Sahlins 1995: 14. The latter work was written in response to Obeyesekere's critique of Sahlins 1985 and other works on Captain Cook and Hawaiian history (Obeyesekere 1992). In particular, Sahlins

This observation applies equally to ethnography, and to the stories of cross-cultural encounters that lie behind the creation of an ethnographic text. In the process of decolonization and in the post-colonial period, anthropologists and other scholars have become increasingly self-conscious and critical of the ways in which ethnography purports to speak for and represent the other.²³ The representational practices and conventions of earlier ethnographic writing, critics have observed, tended to efface the complex dialogue between anthropologist and informant in order to replace it with a monologic, authoritative account of the other culture from a totalizing Western theoretical perspective. In the passage from fieldwork to ethnography, discourse (in Benveniste's sense) was replaced by text; inter-subjective oral exchanges in particular historical contexts were translated into autonomous texts: third-person accounts of an objectified culture. The dialogical situation out of which this knowledge was produced was not excluded, but it was limited to certain *topoi* describing the fieldwork experience, "fables of rapport" with the natives, that helped establish the authoritative position of the ethnographer.²⁴ From a textual position that often obscured asymmetrical relations of power, the ethnographer confidently reconstructed and represented other cultures as illustrations of or evidence for Western anthropological theories. The critique of these modern ethnographical representations, has – to a limited extent – informed the examination of Herodotus and other Greek ethnographical texts in the discipline of Classics.²⁵ But an important aspect of the response to "colonial" forms of ethnography has been neglected. As James Clifford has shown, a series of critics, beginning with Michel Leiris in 1950, rejected

objects to Obeyesekere's assimilation of Hawaiian actions, motivation, and thought to paradigms drawn from Western intellectual traditions, a procedure that assimilates the "other" to the "same" in a way that recapitulates other forms of European intellectual domination.

²³ See Clifford 1988: esp. 21–54 and Clifford in Clifford and Marcus 1986: 8–12.

²⁴ Clifford 1988: 40.

²⁵ As I have mentioned, the analogy with early modern ethnography was more important for Hartog, and was in part informed by Michel de Certeau's reading of Jean de Léry. Though much earlier than the ethnographers considered by Clifford, de Certeau identifies (though in Freudian and Lacanian terms) similar processes by which the speech of the other is (partially) repressed and replaced by a text that it had provoked. In addition to his study of de Léry (noted above, de Certeau 1988: 209–43), see also his studies on Lafitau (de Certeau 1980), and on Montaigne's essay "Of Cannibals" (de Certeau 1986: 67–79). The latter work makes connections with Hartog's study of the Scythian place of the Other. In general, the idea of the Other as irrecoverable, an absence outside of the text, is important for Hartog's exclusion of any connections with historical *realia*. Vasunia 2001: 75–135 incorporates critiques of more recent ethnography, though his analysis, as I have mentioned, is very much informed by Hartog and de Certeau. This broad approach to analyzing representations of the other has certainly been advanced in Classical scholarship in the English-speaking world by the work of Said 1978. For further discussion, see the introduction.

unilateral, monological modes of ethnographic interpretation and representation “that portray the cultural realities of other peoples without placing their own reality in jeopardy,” and instead advocated new forms of ethnographic authority and representation based on discursive paradigms of dialogue and polyphony.²⁶ In experimental forms of ethnography, the dialogical situation of fieldwork and the direct speech of native informants has a much more dominant presence in the text, and in some cases the “informant” has become co-author. These efforts at resolving the problems of ethnographic representation have been inventive and innovative. In some cases, however, they have also been retrospective, turning to earlier models of ethnography, such as the collaboration between Franz Boas and George Hunt, or transitional figures like Bronislaw Malinowski, who asserted the authoritative, interpretative role of ethnographer, but also included direct transcriptions of “data” that were not his words, but those of his Trobriand interlocutors, thus producing a more open, multivocal text.²⁷

I would like to argue that one of the texts viewed as critical to the formation of both Western ethnography and historiography, Herodotus’ *Histories*, should be considered in this light.²⁸ In Herodotus’ description of Egypt, the Greek encounter with another culture is not purely a textual mirage constructed from the elaboration of Greek cultural ideas and oppositional self-definitions. Herodotus confronted not only the vast antiquity of an Egyptian Other, but also – through the mediation of the Egyptian priests – the Egyptian historicity of a particular moment, a characteristic set of relations with the past.²⁹ The voices of the Egyptian priests are

²⁶ Clifford 1988: 41. In a 1950 lecture entitled “L’ethnographie devant le colonialisme,” Leiris advocated a “realistic” historical view of cultures under colonialism, one that did not seek an exoticized “primitive” purity consigned to the past, but recognized change in the emergent cultures of peoples who looked to the future. His exhortation to an ethnography that could benefit colonized peoples included a vision of native ethnographers conducting research both on Western cultures and on their own, as well as guiding the investigations of Western ethnographers on the cultures under colonialism in a collaborative ethnography. The lecture is reprinted in Leiris 1966: 125–56; English translation: Leiris 1989: 112–31. The ideas raised by Leiris have clearly provided foundations for Clifford’s investigations. See also the important early argument for dialogical anthropology by Tedlock 1979.

²⁷ Clifford 1988: 45–46, 53–54; Tedlock 1979: 394. Tedlock also goes back to ethnohistorical documents produced in early colonial contexts, such as the Popol Vuh, that provide evidence of a dialogical encounter (1979: 396, 399).

²⁸ The question of Egyptian–Greek interaction has been obscured at times by anxiety over issues of origin and influence, especially in the years following the publication of Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena* volumes (Bernal 1987–2006). Suggestive though his general arguments regarding the history of Classical scholarship may have been, his reconstruction of the origins of Greek civilization is deeply flawed. On the other side, the response excited by Bernal’s work (especially in the form of Lefkowitz 1996) has been equally unfortunate.

²⁹ For Eric Hirsch and Charles Stewart, historicity is not equivalent to historicity, but rather “describes a human situation in flow, where versions of the past and future (of persons, collectives or things)

ubiquitous in the second book of the *Histories*, and Herodotus engages in a dialogue with these voices and their historical perspective. In Herodotus' relatively open, discursive representation of this encounter, Greek mythical and genealogical notions of the past are imperiled in order to establish a new position in relation to the past, or more correctly, a new form of past with which to connect the present.³⁰ Inspired both by an encounter with the antiquity of Egyptian civilization and a particular awareness of the past, it is an historical discourse which at times verges on the metahistorical. Analyses of the Herodotean "other" fail to grasp this Egyptian role in Herodotus' attempt at formulating a new Greek historical consciousness because their approach to understanding the cultural representations at play is decidedly Hellenocentric. It is, therefore, with the aim of decentering the ethnographical analogy used in reading Herodotus that I approach the anecdote of Hecataeus and the Theban priests reported in the second book of the *Histories*.³¹

THE PRIESTS SAY, THE PRIESTS SAY . . .

Herodotus' story of the priests at Thebes and their impressive monumental representation of the long Egyptian past comes as the climax to an almost continuous string of citations of Egyptian priests as sources on their own

assume present form in relation to events, political needs, available cultural forms and emotional dispositions. This usage . . . capture[s] the reflexive, mutual conditioning that occurs between objects and subjects. . . . Reconfiguring 'historicity' to index the fuller qualities of this social and personal *relationship* to the past and future makes it a complex social and performative condition, rather than an objectively determinable aspect of historical descriptions. Historicity in this sense is the manner in which persons operating under the constraints of social ideologies make sense of the past, while anticipating the future. Historicity is a dynamic social situation open to ethnographic investigation" (Hirsch and Stewart 2005: 262). My aim in this work (not unlike that of Calame 1998) is to discuss historicities in contact across socially and culturally constituted boundaries.

³⁰ It is important to stress that Herodotus' work did represent his actual dialogical encounter with Egyptians. In other words, his citation of Egyptians was not simply a narratological strategy for focalizing cultural criticism of Greek attitudes and assumptions through "native voices." Cf. Munson 2001: 141–46.

³¹ Claude Calame (1998) has made a salutary contribution to decentering the ethnographical analogy around which "other"-studies in Classics are built. We are familiar with the other sort of ethnographical analogy which compares Greeks to other culture groups at least since the time of Lafitau's comparisons between the Algonquin and the Greeks, but there is something novel in Calame's comparison. Calame sets the reconciliation of an indigenous Papua New Guinea chronology (or *temporalité*) with Western chronology in the writings of Michael Somare (the first indigenous prime minister of Papua New Guinea) alongside the work of "*historiopoïēsis*" which Herodotus carries out in his second book as he grapples with the relationship between Greek mythical notions of the past and Egyptian chronology. This strategy usefully inverts the normal structures of the ethnographical analogy described by Hartog, in which we run the risk of too easily seeing ourselves, or at least our ethnographic traditions, in the *Mirror of Herodotus*. An eloquent and lucid comparison of Herodotean and modern ethnography is the well-known article by James Redfield (1985).

history and customs. Very early in his account of Egypt, Herodotus claims that he sought out the priests of Memphis, Thebes, and Heliopolis³² in order to obtain and compare traditions on Egyptian antiquity, and throughout the second book he cites them as authorities on the history, the culture, and even the natural phenomena of Egypt. The quantitative weight of these references – at least nineteen explicit, and some two dozen implicit – clearly shows the Egyptian priests' privileged status within Herodotus' rhetoric of authority. This presence is all the more striking when compared with the absence of their Near Eastern counterparts, the *magoi*, as sources of "barbarian" wisdom in Herodotus' account of Achaemenid Persia.³³ Why this authority for the Egyptian priests? To a certain extent, the answer can be found in the reputation Herodotus attributes to them in his own text. Those who dwell in the cultivated part of Egypt "are the most careful of all men to preserve memory, and by far the most learned (λογιώτατοι)." The Egyptian priests claim to have certain knowledge of chronology, since they are "always reckoning the years and writing them down."³⁴ They have written documents and dynastic lists, and monuments bearing inscriptions – an extraordinary written culture with roots in the distant past, providing an ideal benchmark of certainty when dealing with multiple and contested traditions. But does the position of Egyptian priests in the *Histories* derive solely from Herodotus' construction of a rhetoric of authority corresponding to the expectations of a Greek audience?

There is some evidence of a discourse on Egyptian wisdom that would have been current in the Greek audience of Herodotus' *Histories*, but it is scattered and allusive, and the treatment of Egypt in Greek literature prior to Herodotus tends to dwell on other, legendary elements. In the *Odyssey*, the island of Pharos off the coast of Egypt is the home of the prophetic shape-shifting sea-god Proteus, "who knows the depths of every sea," and from whom Menelaus learns the fates of the Achaeans and how to continue his homeward journey.³⁵ Helen is said to have acquired the magical *nēpenthēs* drug from Egypt, and the poet comments on the Egyptian

³² Hdt. 2.3.1; elsewhere he also claims to have consulted the priests at Saïs (2.28.1–5, 2.130.2).

³³ Herodotus gives as an authority for his account of Cyrus and the rise of the Persians only certain unnamed truthful Persians (1.95), and in his ethnographical account of the *magoi*, they are explicitly ritualists (1.132, 140), and elsewhere interpreters of dreams (1.107); at 1.140, they are contrasted with the Egyptian priests: *magoi* kill everything with their own hands, while Egyptian priests refrain from killing, except in sacrifice.

³⁴ Hdt. 2.77.1; 145.3.

³⁵ Hom. *Od.* 4.382–566. Eur. *Hel.* 142–50 continues this association of Egypt and prophetic knowledge when Teucer comes to consult the seer Theonoe.

reputation for powerful medicines and skilled physicians.³⁶ The preservation of medical knowledge was certainly an important aspect of priestly literary culture in Egypt, but the priests themselves are not mentioned in Homer. Far more prominent is Egypt's reputation for fabulous wealth. The only reference to Egypt in the *Iliad* summons up an image of vast treasure in the storehouses of "hundred-gated Thebes." Menelaus, in the *Odyssey*, tells of the lavish gifts he acquired in Egypt, and Odysseus in his Cretan tales claims that he sought Egypt's riches first in a failed piratical raid, and then in the form of gifts from the generous Egyptians.

These Homeric interests in Egypt as a land in which to seek wealth and military adventure became an historical reality as intensified contacts between Greeks and Egyptians developed during the revival of Egypt's fortunes under the Saïte dynasty of Psammetichus I and his successors.³⁷ Psammetichus, through shrewd maneuvering, was able to reverse the pattern of fragmentation and foreign domination that had periodically disrupted the ideal of a unified Egyptian kingdom during the Third Intermediate Period (1069–664 BCE).³⁸ Growing Libyan influence in the Delta and in the Egyptian army had culminated in the establishment of the relatively successful 22nd Dynasty (945–715 BCE), but these Libyan pharaohs also struggled for power with the Theban priesthood and with rival Libyan rulers. In the latter part of the Third Intermediate Period, external powers affected Egyptian political history to an even greater extent. A short-lived Lower Egyptian kingdom established by the Libyan rulers Tefnakht and Bocchoris (the 24th Dynasty, 727–715 BCE) was twice defeated by Nubian rulers: first Piye and then Shabaka. These kings of the Nubian dynasty (the 25th, 747–656 BCE) succeeded in unifying Egypt and presented themselves as traditional Egyptian pharaohs, but held on to uninterrupted rule for less than fifty years. While Egypt was ruled by Nubians, it suffered two Assyrian invasions, in 671 and 664 BCE, the second of which culminated in the sack of "hundred-gated Thebes" itself. After the latter campaign, the Assyrians recognized Psammetichus I (664–610 BCE) as a vassal king. Within a few

³⁶ Hom. *Od.* 4.227–31. See Vittmann 2003: 194. The reputation of these physicians would continue into Herodotus' day. See below.

³⁷ The best recent overview of Greek–Egyptian contacts in the pre-Hellenistic period is Vittmann 2003: 194–235. Earlier contacts between Egypt and the Aegean in the Late Bronze Age are, of course, well attested, perhaps most notably through the discovery of painted plaster fragments at Tell el-Dab'a (the site of ancient Avaris) that exhibit iconography and techniques common to Minoan and Mycenaean painted plaster from Crete, mainland Greece and Asia Minor (see Brysbaert 2002 and Bietak, Marinatos, and Palivou 2007). Geographical designations for Egypt also appear as personal names in Linear B texts (Vittmann 2003: 194). For brief overviews of archaeological evidence for Bronze Age contacts, see Davies and Schofield 1995.

³⁸ For this period, see the standard account of Kitchen 1986; for a brief overview, see Taylor 2000.

years, Psammetichus consolidated control over all of Egypt, and then took advantage of Elamite hostilities and an Assyrian succession crisis to gain and hold independence from Assyrian suzerainty. As part of this process, Psammetichus appears to have requested and received troops from Gyges of Lydia in the early 650s BCE. These were probably some of the “bronze men from the sea” predicted by the oracle of Buto in Herodotus’ tale: the Ionian and Carian mercenaries who helped Psammetichus overthrow his rivals.³⁹ Foreign mercenaries were, ironically enough, a critical factor in the consolidation of native Egyptian rule and the revival of pharaonic traditions in the Saïte period. Ionians and Carians provided Psammetichus with forces to counterbalance Egyptian nobles, such as Montemhet in Thebes, as well as the rival Delta princes descended from Libyan mercenary chiefs, who could contest his authority as he attempted to restore the pharaonic ideal of a unified Egypt. During the Saïte period, Greeks and Carians, perhaps attracted by visions of wealth, entered military service under the Egyptian pharaoh, and were settled throughout Egypt in garrisons at Migdol and Daphnae in the eastern Delta, at Thebes in the south, Marea on the Libyan side of the Delta, and in the ancient capital of Memphis.⁴⁰ Mercenary service itself was attractive to Greeks as a source of potential gain, but trade also followed and intensified in the Saïte period, especially through the town of Naukratis in the western Delta, settled by Greeks in the reign of Psammetichus I and soon inhabited by merchants from all parts of the Greek world who lived in close proximity to the local Egyptian community.⁴¹

³⁹ Hdt. 2.147–52. The annals of Ashurbanipal provide evidence that Gyges of Lydia sent troops to aid Psammetichus in his revolt. These are widely accepted to be among the Greek and Carian mercenaries employed by the Saïte dynasty. Luckenbill 1926–27: 2.296–97, nos. 784–85. For brief discussions and references, see Kienitz 1953: 12; Austin 1970: 19 n. 3; Haider 1996: 97; Vittmann 2003: 199.

⁴⁰ Some of the military settlements are described by Herodotus (2.30, 154). See also the material evidence for the Greek and Carian presence in Egypt discussed by Kienitz 1953: 35–47; Braun 1982: 35–48; Haider 1996: 97–100; Vittmann 2003: 199–209.

⁴¹ On the foundation of Naukratis in the reign of Psammetichus I, see Sullivan 1996 and Möller 2000: 185–88, though note Bresson 2000: 66 who suggests that the foundation could be somewhat later (late seventh to early sixth century BCE). There has been debate over whether the settlement of Naukratis itself included an Egyptian quarter or not. This has been rejected entirely by Möller 2000: 116–19, 185, 203, but she does not adequately address the Egyptian evidence from Naukratis and her extreme argument for isolation cannot be accepted. There is, in addition to a number of small finds of Egyptian material at Naukratis, considerable evidence, preserved in Egyptian texts, of cult activity conducted by Egyptians for Egyptian gods (Yoyotte 1991–92: 642–44; Yoyotte 1993–94: 679–83). Egyptologists have also argued that the name Naukratis is of Egyptian rather than Greek derivation (see Yoyotte 1991–1992: 640–42, who also reviews earlier discussions). It seems extremely likely, therefore, that there was an Egyptian presence in or very near to the Greek settlement of Naukratis. See also the overview of the debate in Vittmann 2003: 216–23. Greek wine jars and silver

This period of Greek and Carian traffic and settlement in Egypt has produced striking archaeological evidence of cultural familiarity and connections between Egyptians and foreign residents. Some material remains of these immigrant communities show a mix of cultural elements, suggesting that the immigrants were in close contact with Egyptian culture.⁴² A Saïte-period sarcophagus of Wahibre-em-achet (*Wḥ-ib-R^c-m-ḥ.t*, i.e. “Apries-in-the-horizon”), the son of Alexikles and Zenodote, shows that a Greek born in Egypt could adopt an Egyptian dynastic name and Egyptian burial customs,⁴³ and there is also some evidence of intermarriage between Greeks and Egyptians.⁴⁴ These early contacts undoubtedly allowed the transmission of information on Egypt’s ancient civilization back to the Greek world, especially to the Ionian cities with which contact was closest. Greek settlers in Egypt would eventually facilitate Herodotus’ encounter

coins found in Egypt are among the physical evidence of goods Greek merchants carried in order to acquire Egypt’s wealth in the form of grain, linen, papyrus, as well as luxury goods, such as faience trinkets, bronzes, and carved ivory. See Murray 1993: 228–37; Braun 1982: 39; Möller 2000: 203–14.

⁴² Particularly impressive are the Caromemphite stelae recovered from excavations at Saqqara, which bear relief sculptures produced in East Greek or Carian workshops but with Egyptian funerary imagery. In some cases, a scene of *prothesis* drawn from the iconography of Greek funerals is rendered in Egyptian style and setting. Greek mercenaries and traders also left dedicatory inscriptions in Ionic lettering on Egyptian objects and numerous Greek graffiti on Egyptian monuments. Braun 1982: 45–48; Vittmann 2003: 227–31.

⁴³ Grallert 2001. See also the discussion and references in Vittmann 2003: 203. To have had such a fine sarcophagus, this individual must have held a high position in Egyptian society. Other funerary equipment of his reveals that he held the title of “seal bearer of the king of Lower Egypt.” In the Egyptian Late Period, the adoption of a royal name as a surname or “beautiful name” (*rn nfr*) was a sign of loyalty to the king (de Meulenaere 1966: 27–31). In the necropolis of Naucratis was discovered a stela of Apollos, son of Thalinos that is in the form of an Egyptian “false door,” also suggesting some familiarity with Egyptian funerary practice (Bernard 1970: 761–62, no. 31, pl. 40, 4). Another possible case of a Greek adapting to the Egyptian context is found in an Egyptian dedication stela in St. Petersburg dated to the tenth year of Amasis (561 BCE). It documents a donation for lamps for Osiris of Saïs by a “Neferpresineith, son of *Grhs* of Naukratis.” The name *Grhs* is not Egyptian and may represent the Greek name Korax (Vittmann 2003: 220). Another possible example occurs in a proxy decree from Rhodes (*IG* XII 760 = *I. Lindos* II 16). The beneficiary is a man whose name is lost, but who is identified as the son of Pytheas and an interpreter from Naucratis. Part of an ethnic is preserved (Αἰγ-) and A. Bresson has argued that he was an Egyptian (Αἰγ | ἱππίτιον τ]ὸν ἐγ Νουκρά[τιος] – Bresson 1991 and 2000: 35). If Bresson’s interpretation is accepted (and I find it convincing), this individual would either be the son of an Egyptian who adopted a Greek name (perhaps in his role as interpreter), or the offspring of a marriage between a Greek man and an Egyptian woman.

⁴⁴ Braun 1982: 45 notes the base of a statue of Neith from Saïs which bears an inscription of a Pedineith, the son of a Carian father and an Egyptian mother. In the tomb of Siamun in the Siwa Oasis, dated 26th–30th Dynasty, there is a painting of a man with Greek hairstyle, and Egyptian dress, whose wife appears to be Egyptian, and whose son wears a Greek chlamys (Fakhry 1940: 793–99). Hauben 2001: 56–57 n. 20 has suggested that Psammatichos, son of Theokles, who is known from the famous Abu Simbel graffiti (see below), may be identical with a Hor/Psammetichus (see Chevereau 2001: 92–93, 329) whose mother has an Egyptian name. If so, Psammatichos would be the offspring of a mixed marriage.

with Egyptian scribal culture.⁴⁵ In the Saïte period itself, however, the extent and nature of the interactions which early Greek immigrants and visitors were able to have with the Egyptian élite were shaped by their mutual interests and the roles allowed to them by the economies in which they participated. Charaxus, the brother of Sappho, for example, was said to have traveled to Egypt, but he was famed not for discussions with learned priests, but for his relationship with the Naucratis courtesan, Doricha.⁴⁶ Though Greek merchants obviously did carry out transactions with Egyptians on a regular basis, the presence of a permanent Greek settlement would have made it easier for some to limit social interactions to the expatriate community. This was especially so after Amasis restricted the economic activities and settlement of Greek traders to Naucratis, so that it functioned (from the Egyptian perspective) as a port-of-trade, a controlled buffer that insulated a mixed zone of interaction between Greeks and Egyptians from the larger Egyptian economy and population while also facilitating the supervision of trade.⁴⁷

Greek mercenaries would perhaps have had more continuous and sustained contacts with Egyptians in the persons of military leaders under whom they served. These were certainly from the élite of Egyptian society, but whether the commanders were also versed in the scribal traditions of the Egyptian priesthood is less certain. The Greek mercenaries who carved the famous graffiti on the colossi of Rameses II at Abu Simbel in 593/2 BCE sailed upriver with Psammatichos, son of Theokles, but were under the overall command of the Egyptian Potasimto (*P3-di-sm3-t3.wy*), an official whose titles are known from his sarcophagus and a libation bowl.

⁴⁵ In this regard, it is worth noting that the usual Demotic word for “Greek” was *Wynn*, i.e. “Ionian.” See Erichsen 1954: 80. The word is preserved in Coptic as ⲱⲩⲛⲉⲛⲓⲛⲓ. See Crum 1939: 484a; Vycichl 1983: 231. This Late Egyptian word may derive from the Aramaic plural *Yawnaym*, suggesting that it entered the Egyptian language at the time of the Persian domination. See Černý 1976: 213, and Sethe 1916.

⁴⁶ Braun 1982: 43; Möller 2000: 199–200; Hdt. 2.135 connected Charaxus with another famous courtesan from Naucratis, the Thracian Rhodopis. See also Strabo 17.1.33, and Athenaeus 13.596b–c (himself a native of Naucratis). These testimonia suggest that there was a basis for the story in Sappho’s poetry, but the evidence in the extant fragments (e.g. Sappho fr. 15 (8) Lobel–Page) is not conclusive (Lidov 2002).

⁴⁷ In the reign of Amasis, it became the only Greek trading colony, though probably not (as Herodotus suggests) through an act of philhellenism (see Kienitz 1953: 45–47). On Naucratis as a port-of-trade, see Möller 2000. From the Greek perspective, the residents of Naucratis also had an intermediate status as “metics in Egypt” living in an *emporion*. Naucratis did not develop into a *polis* until the fourth century BCE (Bresson 2000: 13–84). Despite the restrictions on Greek merchants, it was still possible for commerce to be a vehicle for cultural and intellectual contacts. The Laconian “Cup of Arcesilas,” which dates to ca. 560 BCE, shows a scene of weighing silphium that uses Egyptian iconographic elements derived from scenes of the weighing of the heart in the *Book of the Dead* (see Bresson 2000: 85–94). Note also the tradition that Plato brought a shipment of olive oil to Egypt in order to pay for the costs of his sojourn there (Plut. *Sol.* 2.8).

The inscriptions on these confirm that he was indeed the commander of foreigners and Greeks, but he does not appear to have held any priestly office.⁴⁸ Greek mercenary leaders would have worked with such Egyptian commanders and officials constantly, and while Psammatichos was probably a second-generation resident, others returned home with wealth, tales of adventure, and whatever knowledge of Egypt and Egyptian traditions they gleaned in the course of their service. This early circulation of men, material, and lore between Egypt and the Greek world is encapsulated in the statue of the mercenary Pedon found near Priene. Pedon, who probably served under Psammetichus I, celebrated his success with a Greek dedication on an Egyptian block-statue, a traditional form depicting a man seated on the ground with his knees drawn up and his arms folded across them:⁴⁹

Pedon dedicated me, the son of Amphinneōs [or Amphinnes], having brought me from Egypt; to him the Egyptian king – Psammetichus – gave as a reward of valor a golden bracelet and a city, on account of his virtue.

Πηδῶμ μ' ἀνέθηκε | ν ὠμφίννεω · ἐξ Αἰγ | ὑπτῶγαγών · ρῶι βα | σιλεὺς ἔδωφ' ὠιγύπ | τιος · Ψαμμήτιχο | ς · ἀριστήϊα ψιλίό | ν τε χρύσεον καὶ | πόλιν ἀρετῆς ἔ | νεκα.

The statue presents a striking combination of traditions. Though inscribed in the Greek boustrophedon-style, the placement of the inscription on one of the flat, trapezoidal surfaces offered by the block form conforms to Egyptian practice. Like many Egyptian biographical texts, this one celebrates honors from the king, including golden bracelets given as a reward for martial prowess, and thus equivalent to the Egyptian “gold of valor” (*nbw n ḳn.t*) traditionally awarded by the pharaoh.⁵⁰ The Greek

⁴⁸ Kienitz 1953: 41–42. For a discussion of the command structure see Hauben 2001: 56–71, who suggests that Psammatichos may have been the overall commander of the expedition. Compare also the different reconstruction of Haider 2001: 201–6. In either case, the Greek mercenary commander would be in contact with Egyptian counterparts. Otto 1954: 12 suggests that in the Saïte period priesthoods were not so important as other official positions. On the Nubian campaign of Psammetichus II, see also the earlier works of Sauneron and Yoyotte 1952, and Bernard and Masson 1957: 3–20. On the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Potasimto, see Rowe 1938, Ratié 1962, and the further references in Chevereau 2001: 88–89.

⁴⁹ For the text of the Pedon inscription and discussion, see Şahin 1987; Masson and Yoyotte 1988; Ampolo and Bresciani 1988; and discussions in Haider 2001: 200–1; 2004: 450–51, 453; Vittmann 2003: 203–6. For the significance of the block statue type, see Schulz 1992.

⁵⁰ See Feucht 1977; Masson and Yoyotte 1988: 177–78. The gift of a city is more puzzling. Does this refer to the rights to settle in a particular place, or the revenues of a village? J. Yoyotte (in Masson and Yoyotte 1988: 178–79), however, has pointed out a close parallel in the contemporary Egyptian biographical text of Nesnaisut, son of Horudja, the governor of Edfu, which records his rewards (*ḥsw.t*) from the king coupled with his appointments as governor of several cities in succession. Perhaps Pedon was not only honored with “gold of praise” (or “valor”) and thus integrated into the socio-political relations of the Saïte court, but also employed in some official capacity or military command.

dedication formula suggests that the statue was originally placed in a temple, perhaps the Panionium, the common sanctuary of the Ionians, not far from Priene on the peninsula of Mt. Mycale. This is also the appropriate Egyptian setting for a block statue, and indeed statues of this kind would have been among those that Hecataeus and Herodotus later saw in their visits to Egyptian temples. These mixed features of Pedon's statue and its use suggest that Pedon brought back with him to Ionia not only a statue, but also some of the cultural knowledge surrounding its function in its original context.⁵¹

Greek knowledge of Egypt undoubtedly followed the circuits created by mercenary service and trade, but Egypt was also known in the Archaic period of Greek history as a source of wisdom and learning. Later Greek and Roman writers have preserved a well-developed tradition of stories about early intellectual, religious, and artistic figures who benefited from travels to Egypt: from Orpheus, Daedalus, and Homer to Plato and Democritus.⁵² Most of these stories are of dubious historical value, and the tales themselves likely began to circulate well after Herodotus. Some, however, could have had foundations in actual journeys, or at least in relatively early biographical traditions. Pythagoras was among those Greek wise men supposed to have visited Egypt in the sixth century, and to have derived some of his doctrines from Egypt.⁵³ The Milesian philosopher Thales was also reputed to have paid a visit to Egypt, perhaps aided by the close ties between Naucratis and Miletus.⁵⁴ And the great Athenian lawgiver Solon was supposed to have visited Egypt sometime after his archonship and learned from Egyptian culture.⁵⁵ This visit, at least, is supported by a fragment of Solon's verse preserved in Plutarch:

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν εἰς Αἴγυπτιον ἀφίκετο, καὶ διέτριπεν ὡς αὐτὸς φησὶ·
Νείλου ἐπὶ προχοῇσι, Κανωβίδος ἐγγύθεν ἁκτῇς

First he arrived in Egypt, and, as he himself says, he stayed
"At the mouth of the Nile, near the promontory of Canopus."

⁵¹ For the latter discussion, see Moyer 2006: 247–50. ⁵² See, e.g., Diod. Sic. 1.96.

⁵³ Later accounts even identify the priests with whom he met as either Oinouphis of Heliopolis, or a certain Sonchis (Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.15.69; Iambl. *Myst.* 1.1). The visit is possible, since Pythagoras left Samos at a time of close connections with Egypt, owing to the alliance between Polycrates and Amasis (Apollodorus, *FGrH* 244 F 338(d), 339; Hdt. 3.39). Herodotus alludes to Egyptian origins for a theory of metempsychosis, suggesting a prior tradition that connected Pythagoras to Egypt (Hdt. 2.123). Cf. Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 10 (*Mor.* 354d–f); Braun 1982: 54.

⁵⁴ Thales: Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 10 (*Mor.* 354d–e); Hieronymus fr. 21 Hiller in Diog. Laert. 1.27 = Thales, DK 11 A 1.

⁵⁵ Diod. Sic. 1.96. Solon is said to have studied with the Egyptian priests Sonchis at Saïs (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 10) and Psenophis at Heliopolis (Plut. *Sol.* 26.1).

The tradition Herodotus reports is that Solon visited the pharaoh Amasis in Egypt, and he claims that Solon borrowed from this king his legislation requiring the declaration of one's means of livelihood.⁵⁶ Though there are historical inconsistencies in this tradition, comparison with the tradition of Solon's other well-known royal visit, at the court of Croesus of Lydia, makes Egypt's role as a source of wisdom clear. In the encounter between Solon and Croesus, it is the Lydian king who learns in dramatic fashion from the words of the Greek sage, but in Egypt, Solon learns from Amasis.

Herodotus' citation of the Egyptian priests, then, does take up a pre-existing discourse in which Egypt is a source of learning for the Greeks. His emphasis on the priests as informants, however, does not appear to have been part of this prior discourse, with the exception of Hecataeus' report of his experience at Thebes. Every source which specifically puts early Greek thinkers in contact with Egyptian priests is later than Hecataeus and Herodotus. In the few cases where earlier traditions of contact mention an Egyptian individual, it is usually the king or an unspecified aristocratic figure.⁵⁷ The best-attested of these journeys, the story of Solon's visit to Amasis in Egypt, seems to have included discussions with Egyptian priests only in later versions.⁵⁸ The earliest known occurrence, then, of the trope of the intellectual's visit with his Egyptian counterparts is the episode of Hecataeus and the Theban priests, which was subsequently repeated and elaborated by Herodotus.

The different figures met in Solon's encounter and in the one described by Hecataeus and Herodotus reveal a salient feature of the historical period in which these Greek historians made their inquiries. Solon during his travels is supposed to have met with the king in Egypt, while Hecataeus

⁵⁶ Hdt. 1.30.1, 2.177. In this regard, it is important to note that in two short texts on the verso of the *Demotic Chronicle*, Amasis was described as a lawgiver in Egyptian tradition. See Spiegelberg 1914: 30–32; for French translations of the texts see Devauchelle 1995: 74–75. There was also a tradition that the laws that Solon borrowed were those of the 24th-Dynasty king Bocchoris. On the tradition of Bocchoris the lawgiver, reported by Diodorus but perhaps originating among Egyptians of the Saïte dynasty, see Markiewicz 2008. Herodotus (2.160) also reports that a delegation of officials from Elis consulted Psammis (Psammetichus II) about the fairness of the Olympic games; a council of the most learned Egyptians was summoned, and they gave an instructive reply.

⁵⁷ The Homeric poems may represent some vague knowledge of pre-Saïte Egypt. When visiting Egypt, Menelaus and Helen were the guests of Thon and Polydamna, and Polybus and Alcandre. Odysseus in his Cretan tale (Hom. *Od.* 14.278–80) claims that he went as a suppliant to the king. The sons of Aegyptus in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, produced between Herodotus and Hecataeus, are described as "lords" (ἄνακτες, l. 906), though they are clearly not regarded as a source of wisdom.

⁵⁸ Plato (*Ti.* 21e–23d) has Solon meet with an Egyptian priest in Saïs, but he seems consciously to reverse the historians' trope by having the Egyptian priest inform Solon of facts that the Athenians have forgotten, namely that Athens is a thousand years older than the priest's own city of Saïs. On Plato's interests in manipulating this story and the myth of Atlantis, see Vasunia 2001: 216–47.

and Herodotus inquired among Egyptian priests. The Egyptian pharaoh, secure as a traditional icon of Egyptian civilization in the middle of the Saïte period, was no longer on the throne by the time Hecataeus went to Thebes. Egypt had been conquered by Cambyses in 525 BCE, and both Hecataeus and Herodotus visited a country under Persian domination, in a period of Egypt's history that was marked by revolts and later viewed as a time of suffering under foreign oppression. Cambyses himself was, according to Herodotus, remembered by Egyptians as a madman who had murdered the Apis bull, and committed other crimes against Egyptian religion.⁵⁹ The reality of Persian rule was, at least initially, probably not as dire as these stories suggest. Cambyses appears to have shown interest in adopting the pharaonic mode of kingship in Egypt, and some Egyptians, whatever their qualms may have been, did accommodate themselves to their new rulers (see below). There is also some doubt about whether Cambyses killed the Apis bull, though he probably did excite resentment by putting severe restrictions on the revenues collected by the temples.⁶⁰ True or not, the currency in Herodotus' day of the story of Cambyses' attack on the Apis attests to the anti-Persian sentiment in Egypt at that time.⁶¹ This is not surprising since Herodotus probably traveled through Egypt later in the reign of Artaxerxes I, in the relative tranquility following the defeat of the revolt of Inaros (ca. 464–454 BCE), the third or fourth revolt against Persian rule, and the most serious one that the Egyptians had raised.⁶² Despite these periodic disruptions, contacts between the Greek world and Egypt continued – indeed, the Athenians had sent ships to support Inaros. And trade, especially with Greek cities from Asia Minor, also kept circuits of

⁵⁹ Hdt. 3.27–29, 37–38.

⁶⁰ The reality of Cambyses' murder of the Apis bull has been debated for over 150 years. Though scholarly opinion in the later twentieth century tended toward exonerating Cambyses and considering the story a fictional product of Greek and Egyptian sentiment against the Persians, the case was reopened by Depuydt 1995, who judges Cambyses guilty, but also provides a good overview of the debate. Though Briant 2002: 55–57 presents the "standard" version (i.e. that Cambyses was innocent), he does also consider the possible ramifications of more recent arguments to the contrary (2002: 887–88). The evidence for the revenue restrictions is a Demotic text on the verso of the *Demotic Chronicle* that refers to Cambyses limiting the collection of various revenues in kind. See Devauchelle 1995: 75. For discussion of this evidence and the broader question of Cambyses' activities in Egypt, see Briant 2002: 50–61.

⁶¹ On anti-Persian sentiment in Egypt see, e.g., Devauchelle 1995. The Egyptian images of their Persian rulers were not without nuance, since Darius appears to have fared much better than Cambyses.

⁶² On the Egyptian revolt of 464–454 BCE, which also involved some disturbances caused by another Delta prince, Amyrtaeus, see Briant 2002: 573–77. Earlier revolts had occurred in 522, 486, and perhaps in 518 BCE (see Briant 2002: 115, 161, 410, 472, 525–26). Herodotus' visit was also probably in the period after the so-called Peace of Callias (the debate over which has been extensive; nevertheless, there was an abatement of hostilities; see Briant 2002: 557–58, 579–80).

communication open throughout the fifth century, no doubt facilitating Herodotus' trip to Egypt and his interviews with the Egyptian priests.⁶³

To the early Greek historians, the Egyptian priest, in the absence of a native pharaoh, had evidently become the proper representative of Egyptian culture. This status in Greek thought, however, also reflects the profile of certain priests in the late period of Egyptian history who were drawn into a wider economy of specialists serving at the court of the great king. Herodotus mentions an Egyptian eye-doctor sent by Amasis to serve Cyrus at the Persian king's request, and when the Greek doctor Democedes arrived at the court of Darius, "those deemed to be the best in medical skill among the Egyptians" were at his side.⁶⁴ Though in this story Democedes succeeds where the Egyptian doctors fail, it is clear that the Egyptians are the standard against which medical skill is measured at the court of the great king. Egyptian sources, of course, tell a story more to the priests' advantage. The remarkable biographical inscription of Udjahorresne outlines his career first as a priest, administrative official, and naval commander under Amasis and Psammetichus III, and then as the chief physician and palace administrator to Cambyses after the Persian conquest.⁶⁵ In this capacity, Udjahorresne claims to have exercised considerable influence at the Persian court.⁶⁶ He composed Cambyses' Egyptian titulary as King of Upper and Lower Egypt, and made a successful petition to the Persian king resulting in the expulsion of foreigners from the temple of Neith at Saïs, and the restoration of the sanctuary and its festivals. Under Darius, he was sent to restore the temple scriptorium, or "House of Life," an institution whose scribal activities involved not only religious literature but also texts in other areas, including medicine, dream interpretation, historical records, and popular literature.⁶⁷

⁶³ Even before the so-called Peace of Callias, Ionian ships from cities under Persian control, such as Phaselis, conducted trade with Egypt. An erased Aramaic document beneath the text of Ahiqar discovered at Elephantine contains extracts from the ledger of an Achaemenid customs post for the year 475 BCE, during which time Ionian ships from Phaselis were a regular part of the traffic to and from Egypt (Yardeni 1994; Briant and Descat 1998; Bresson 2000: 68–70). For Greek trade with Egypt in the Persian period more generally, see Bresson 2000: 68–73 and Briant 2002: 383–85.

⁶⁴ Hdt. 3.1; 3.129: νομίζων δὲ καὶ πρότερον περὶ ἑωυτὸν ἔχειν Αἰγυπτίων τοὺς δοκέοντας εἶναι πρώτους τὴν ἱητρικὴν, τούτοις ἔχρᾰτο. The story of Democedes (3.125–37), who convinces Darius to send him on a reconnaissance expedition to Hellas, is a longer variation on the theme of the unknown Egyptian doctor who contrives revenge against Amasis for sending him to Persia. On itinerant religious figures and other specialists, see Burkert 1992: 4–87, Zaccagnini 1983 and Moyer 2006.

⁶⁵ For texts and translations of the statue inscription of Udjahorresne, see Posener 1936: 1–26, Tulli 1940, and Lichtheim 1980: 36–41. For discussion, see Lloyd 1982; Vittmann 2003: 122–25, pl. 15.

⁶⁶ This picture of the Egyptian priest as an authoritative figure outside Egypt recalls the narrative of the Bentresh stele (Louvre C 284), which begins with a request from a prince of Bakhtan (Bactria?) that the pharaoh send an Egyptian wise man to heal his daughter. See n. 108 below.

⁶⁷ A brief survey of the contents of a temple library is given by Redford 1986a: 215–17.

In describing the benefits conferred on Saïs by Cambyses, the biography of Udjahorresne is at pains to emphasize that these were the direct result of the priest's intercession with the Persian king.⁶⁸

This has been read as a defensive presentation, intended for domestic consumption, of Udjahorresne's rather complex position as an Egyptian priest in the service of a hated foreign conqueror,⁶⁹ but this emphasis on the priest's own agency in achieving various benefits for his community also shares a quality detectable in other Late Period biographical texts: the expression of a greater degree of independence from the king than in previous periods. Though the titles and epithets attributed to individuals often invoke traditional, idealized expressions of proximity to the king as the gauge of high rank and favor, several texts describe the pharaoh's actions as stemming from the direction or impetus of the biographical subject, a priest or administrative official, even in periods of native rule.⁷⁰ Such expressions suggest that the members of the Egyptian élite who inscribed these texts were aware that they possessed a greater degree of authority and autonomy as a result of periodically weakened central rule and projected it in their self-representation. This political situation was also reflected in the Late Period Egyptian ideology of kingship. Though the traditional role and conduct of the pharaoh persisted as an ideal, the infallibility of the reigning king was relativized. His legitimacy came to depend on his adherence to the principles of universal justice and order signified by the Egyptian Maat (*Mꜛ.t*), and on divine favor as an index of that adherence.⁷¹ In these circumstances, the priestly class possessed an elevated status as arbitrators of conformity to Maat, since they actively maintained the cultural and

⁶⁸ In three places (§§ 22, 26, 30), he claims that the king had given orders for the aforementioned reforms and restorations as a result of Udjahorresne's counsel. See also the inscription of Neshor, in which the general is presented as rescuing the king from his fear (Otto 1954: 115).

⁶⁹ Lloyd 1982. There is a peculiar epilogue to the story of Udjahorresne in the posthumous cult devoted to him at Memphis two hundred years later. Udjahorresne may also lie behind the figure of Bothor in the Coptic Cambyses romance. See Ray 1988: 258. Other figures also appear to have required exculpatory rhetoric in their biographical and funerary texts owing to their activities in the service of Persian rulers. Texts in the tomb of Petosiris go to elaborate lengths to defend the innocence of Petosiris' brother, who appears to have acted as an executioner during the second Persian domination (Menu 1994: 1996). In one of these texts (inscription 63), Petosiris follows a model drawn from the sarcophagus of Ankhnesneferibre, who seems to have been in a similar position under Cambyses (Menu 1996: 350–52).

⁷⁰ Otto 1954: 103–18 gives a detailed discussion of this phenomenon and several examples from Late Period biographical inscriptions. Note also Lloyd 1983: 298.

⁷¹ Lloyd 1983: 298. The contingent nature of kingship in the Late Period is most clearly expressed in the *Demotic Chronicle*, on which see further below in Chapter 2. See Otto 1954: 117–18, and Johnson 1983.

ideological heritage of Egyptian culture as embodied in the House of Life and other temple institutions.⁷²

The difference, therefore, between Solon's meeting with the pharaoh and Hecataeus' encounter with the priests represents not simply a novel variation on the trope of "Egypt as land of wisdom" in a rhetoric of authority developed by early Greek historians. Rather, the encounter at Thebes represents a process of inquiry undoubtedly motivated by a prior tradition of exploring Egypt's ancient wisdom, but whose outcome was also shaped by those who – at that historical moment – had come to be the preeminent representatives of Egyptian culture.

THE EGYPTIAN MIRAGE: PRIESTLY GENEALOGIES

Herodotus' account of the physical confrontation with Egypt's long chronology through images of Theban priests seems distorted by his penchant for hyperbole, especially in the vast number of consecutive generations the statues are held to represent. Perhaps this was nothing more than Herodotus' way of evoking wonder (θῶμα) through a quantification of Egypt's vast temporal depth.⁷³ The number 345, it has been argued, was simply invented in order to tally with the 341 Egyptian kings he had just mentioned who ruled from the time of Min to the dodearchy (with the addition of a few rulers for the period from Psammetichus onward),⁷⁴ and with the list of 330 kings' names he claimed Egyptian priests had read to him.⁷⁵ All these numbers seem like gross exaggerations, especially since Herodotus reckons the span of Egyptian history as stretching 11,340 years on this basis. Nevertheless, the number of generations, at least, is not at all implausible as a record of what Egyptian priests might have said about their own history. King-lists were certainly kept in various forms throughout Egyptian history,⁷⁶ and monumental versions of such lists would have made them readily accessible to Greek travelers. The Abydos king-lists of Sety I and Rameses II display the cartouches of seventy-six kings in what

⁷² Udjahorresne, in fact, virtually instructs the foreign king on appropriate action. See also the texts from the tomb of Petosiris in which he describes the propriety and legitimacy of his actions on behalf of his community in terms of an ideal of kingship (conformity to Maat) which he knows to be absent, but whose values he pursues at a more local level. Otto 1954: 113; Menu 1995.

⁷³ Hartog 1988: 230–37 has argued that quantification is used to cultivate θῶμα in Herodotus' rhetoric of otherness.

⁷⁴ Hdt. 2.142.

⁷⁵ Hdt. 2.100.1. Redford 1986a: 215 n. 49 has suggested that the number 330 results from a misreading of the plural strokes in an expression meaning "hundreds and tens."

⁷⁶ Redford's catalogue of known king-lists includes examples ranging from the 5th Dynasty to the Ptolemaic period. Redford 1986a: 1–64.

later became known to Greeks as the Memnonion. The concentration of early Greek (as well as Phoenician and Aramaic) graffiti in the area of the king-lists suggests that it was a popular site for foreign visitors in the Late Period.⁷⁷ An example of a king-list recorded on papyrus, such as the one from which Herodotus claims the priests read to him, was found in the Theban necropolis in 1822. The Turin Canon, which dates to the reign of Rameses II, gives a list of kings' names arranged in groups with headings and summations giving the total number of kings in a group and their total number of regnal years. In its incomplete state, the exact number of kings cannot be ascertained, and in any case the list would only include kings up to the reign of Rameses II, some eight centuries before the time of Herodotus. Nevertheless, the scale of the king-list – around 293 to 346 names – is of the same order as the one described by Herodotus.⁷⁸ The tradition represented by the king-list of the Egyptian priest and historian Manetho is also comparable. Compiled in the early Ptolemaic period with the aid of Egyptian temple archives and monumental inscriptions, the *Aegyptiaca* included a total of 323 pharaohs up to the end of the 25th Dynasty.⁷⁹ The high number of monarchs in these lists is due to the inclusion of all kings known to have ruled, even those who reigned a very short

⁷⁷ Rutherford 2003. I would like to thank Ian Rutherford for drawing my attention to this evidence. For the graffiti, see Perdrizet and Lefebvre 1919. See also Piankoff 1958–60.

⁷⁸ Hemmerdinger 1996 makes too much of early readings of a fragment of the Turin Canon, in which certain scholars wanted to see the number 330. Nevertheless, the work of Ryholt 1997: 9–30, who has examined the fibres of the Turin Canon in order to improve on the arrangement of the fragments in the publication of Gardiner 1959, allows an estimate of the number of kings from Menes onward that would have been listed in the document. Since each pharaoh's entry occupies one line, and since Ryholt has reconstructed the number of lines for each column, a rough count of the number of kings can be achieved by adding up the number of lines, less the number of lines occupied by headings and summations. Thus, starting from Menes in 3/10 (= Gardiner II/10), the eleven columns of the Turin Canon would have included approximately 254 names. Ryholt also notes evidence that the end of the papyrus roll was cut off, and suggests that a twelfth column with up to thirty more names could have been part of the Turin Canon (for a total of up to 284). That such king-lists varied in length is evident from the *wsf*-entries, which represent lacunae in the *Vorlage* carefully marked by the copyist of the Turin Canon. By including missing kings known from other sources that may have fallen in these lacunae, a further twenty-three kings could be added to the intact *Vorlage* (see Ryholt 1997: 10–12). In any case, the approximate number of kings in the tradition represented by the Turin Canon would be between 254 and 307 kings. At the longest, the list could include kings only up to the reign of Rameses II. If one adds the thirty-nine kings from Rameses II to the end of the 25th Dynasty recorded in Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, which undoubtedly drew on similar traditions (see Redford 1986a: 213–28), the scale of a king-list such as the one Herodotus reported could have ranged roughly from 293 to 346 names. Herodotus' figures are clearly within the realm of possibility.

⁷⁹ This is the point at which Herodotus pauses in his narrative in order to give his figures. See Lloyd 1988a: 34. Redford 1986a: 204–332 gives a detailed analysis of the composition of the *Aegyptiaca* (essentially a king-list with inserted narratives), and the probable sources on which Manetho relied. See further in Chapter 2 below.

time in periods of great turmoil, such as the First Intermediate Period, and all the kings of those eras when the country was divided and ruled by two different dynasties, as in the Second and Third Intermediate Periods.⁸⁰ Herodotus' error or exaggeration consists simply in assuming that each of the kings in the Egyptian chronology represented a full generation, and reckoning three generations per century.⁸¹

As for the statues which Herodotus claims to have seen, large numbers of statues of all kinds were erected in most Egyptian temples. These would have included human figures placed there as part of mortuary provisions so that those represented could partake of temple offerings in the afterlife. A cache of around 800 statues was, in fact, discovered by Georges Legrain in the forecourt of the seventh pylon of the temple of Amun at Karnak.⁸² Many of these were statues of priests, including high priests. The latest of them date to the late Ptolemaic or early Roman period, at which time the sculptures were likely cleared from the cluttered temple of Amun and buried.⁸³ Most of the statues of the Karnak cache, therefore, were present to be viewed by visiting Greek intellectuals in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.⁸⁴ Though Hecataeus and Herodotus certainly did not see statues representing 345 consecutive generations of high priests at Thebes, it is plausible enough that their Egyptian guides and interpreters showed them images representing extensive genealogies of priests succeeding to the offices of their forefathers. Remarkable examples do, in fact, survive of the sort of visual record of genealogy which would have impressed upon the travelling Greek historians the long continuum of the Egyptian past.

A small seated figure of the priest Basa, in the collection of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, represents the kind of image

⁸⁰ Listing contemporaneous rulers as though sequential is common in various traditions, including the Sumerian and Assyrian king-lists, and the Behistun inscription composed by Darius I. See Henige 1974: 42–46.

⁸¹ In fact, Herodotus makes a further mathematical error which slightly reduces the total. The number of years should be 11,366. See Wiedemann 1890: 505; Miller 1965: 113.

⁸² Legrain 1905, 1906–25; Lloyd 1975–88: 3, 109; Assmann 1991: 304.

⁸³ de Meulenaere 1995. For further bibliography on the statues of the Karnak cache, see Porter and Moss 1972: 136–67.

⁸⁴ Herodotus claims that he was led into the μέγαρον. Normally, the sanctuary of the temple was forbidden to all but Egyptian priests, but Herodotus was most likely admitted to one of the many outer courtyards or halls to see the statues. On the placement of the statues of non-royal individuals in the forecourts and more accessible areas of temples, see Sourouzian 1986: 412–13 and Wildung 1982: 1115–16. Fehling 1989: 80, and West 1991: 148 object that Hecataeus and Herodotus claim to have seen wooden statues, when in fact most of the Karnak statues were made of stone. West sees this as an Herodotean touch, intended to lend an air of spurious antiquity to the anecdote, since wood was regarded by Greeks as the material of ancient statues. Wooden statues were, in fact, found among the objects in the Karnak cache, though they deteriorated very rapidly once exposed to the air. Legrain 1905: 63.

Hecataeus and Herodotus may have seen in Thebes and elsewhere.⁸⁵ Basa was a member of a prominent family in the priestly hierarchy of Denderah in the late 22nd or early 23rd Dynasty (ca. 850–775 BCE). On the sides of the figure are inscribed an extensive biographical text and the names and titles of twenty-six generations of paternal ancestors. Though far from the 345 generations Herodotus claims he was shown by the priests at Thebes, this statuette nevertheless represents a concern on the part of a priestly family for carefully maintaining and representing a record of its connections to the past and its long association with the priesthood. An even more remarkable genealogy is found in a relief in white limestone now in Berlin, dating to the reign of Sheshonq V (Dynasty 22, ca. 767–730 BCE).⁸⁶ Four registers each containing fifteen standing figures represent sixty generations of a single family of priests at Memphis, reaching back to the reign of Montuhotep I at the beginning of the 11th Dynasty (ca. 2160 BCE). This span of time – more than 1,300 years – covers an enormous part of Egyptian history, leaving out only the Old Kingdom and the early part of the First Intermediate Period. The hieratic figures advancing with panther skins over their shoulders and flails in their hands likely represent statues such as those described in Herodotus 2.143.⁸⁷ Like the images the travelling Greek historians claim to have seen, the figures in the Memphite genealogy purport to represent a continuous line of sons succeeding to their father's position, even when this is chronologically impossible. After fifteen generations, the genealogy begins to exhibit a telescoping effect. Between the contemporaries of the pharaohs Amonemnisu (21st Dynasty) and Rameses II (19th Dynasty), only one priest intervenes in a period of around 150 years. Donald Redford has suggested that priestly genealogists did not have reliable written records for periods earlier than the twelfth century BCE, and after that point, they either relied on oral traditions or artificial reconstructions that extended their genealogies further back into the Egyptian past.⁸⁸ The Memphite genealogy is particularly suggestive, since the priests of Memphis are prominent among the chief informants Herodotus continually cites.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Oriental Institute Museum 10729, Ritner 1994; Ritner 2009: 25–31.

⁸⁶ Berlin 23673, published in Borchardt 1935: 96–112 and pls. 2–2a. See also von Beckerath 1997: 29–30. A new transcription and translation is now available in Ritner 2009: 21–25. I would like to thank Robert Ritner for drawing my attention to this remarkable document, and for sharing his transcriptions and translations in advance of publication. As Ritner 2009: 22 points out, the relief in its complete form may have continued around the corner, in which case it would have included even more generations.

⁸⁷ Redford 1970: 9 and 1986a: 63–64.

⁸⁸ Redford 1970: 5–8 and 1986a: 63.

⁸⁹ E.g., Hdt. 2.28, 54, 99–102, 104, 106–7, 111–13, 116, 118–21, etc. On a stele from the Memphite Serapeum, dated to the reign of Sheshonq V (767–730 BCE), Psenhor traces his lineage back fifteen

The statues of the Karnak cache itself have not produced genealogical texts as extensive as the Memphite example, but those preserved were sufficient for Legrain to reconstruct the lineages of a few Theban families whose members held important priesthoods over many generations.⁹⁰ The most extensive of these genealogical texts, on the back of a statue of the Fourth Prophet of Amun, Djedkhonsefankh, includes a list of fourteen generations of Djedkhonsefankh's ancestors.⁹¹ This is not particularly impressive, even when compared to Hecataeus' brief Greek genealogy, but two formal elements of the text are significant. First, the genealogical information becomes compressed after about five generations. Instead of listing the various titles of each generation, the phrase "like these" (*mi nn*) is inserted, giving an even greater impression of the uniformity of titles and offices possessed by each generation than might strictly be the case.⁹² Secondly, after the last generation is listed the generations of this priest's house are extended artificially into the dim reaches of the past by the phrase "one being the son of the other in this house, from fathers to fathers, since the time of the earliest kings" (*iw w^c sⁱ w^c m pr pn m it.w n it.w dr rk drty.w*).⁹³ The intent of this text was undoubtedly to give the impression of a family

generations (Malinine, Posener, and Vercoutter 1968: no. 31, pp. 30–31, pl. x; see also von Beckerath 1997: 30–31; for the transliteration and translation, see Ritner 2009: 17–21). Herodotus also claims to have consulted the priests at Heliopolis, and the tradition of lengthy Late Period genealogies is attested there as well in a lintel dated ca. 630–620 BCE that represents Patjenfy making offerings to thirteen generations of his ancestors (Leahy and Leahy 1986). D. Fehling's view that Herodotus simply invented sources at appropriate moments is untenable, since much that Herodotus reports, despite its errors, derives from genuine Egyptian traditions concerning the past. See Lloyd 1988a: 22–31.

⁹⁰ See e.g. Legrain 1905, 1910.

⁹¹ Cairo CG 42211, text k (Legrain 1906–25: 3, 31–32) = Jansen-Winkeln 1985: 1.88–89, 2.475, pl. 21. The cartouches of Osorkon III and Takeloth III date the statue to the middle of the eighth century BCE. For other texts relating to this family, see Kitchen 1986: 576. Jansen-Winkeln 2001: 1.13–17, 2.334, pls. 4–5 has published and translated another biographical text with a lengthy genealogy that appears on a previously unpublished statue from the Karnak cache (Cairo JE 38002). This statue of *P₃-n-m^c.t*, dating to the 25th Dynasty (747–656 BCE), records thirteen generations of the owner's ancestors. As in Cairo CG 42211, the expression *mi nw* ("like these," a variant of *mi nn*) is used to express the uniformity of titles generation after generation. See further below.

⁹² There is some variation. Additional titles beyond what is implied by *mi nn* are added to the ancestors in the tenth and fourteenth generations (Cairo Cat. 42211, text k, coll. 7–8). Brunner 1975: 16 notes that the use of the phrase *mi nn* was a feature of Late Period genealogies. The genealogies of Basa and Pasenhor noted above use the same phrase, and it continued to be used into the Ptolemaic period.

⁹³ Cf. the translation of Jansen-Winkeln 1985: 1.89: "indem einer der Sohn des anderen in diesem Haus war, als Väter (wiederum) von Vätern seit der Zeit der Vorfahren," which improves on Legrain's translations (Legrain 1905: 76 and 1910: 104). For my rendering of *drty.w*, cf. Redford 1986a: 318, and Erman and Grapow 1926–1963: 5.597–98, esp. §598.1, where it is noted that the expression *drty.w* is not used of the gods or with the divine determinative until the Ptolemaic period; note also the parallel in Sethe 1906: 344.

long associated with the Theban priesthoods, whose lineage was coterminous with the entire succession of Egyptian kings. As in the case of the Memphite genealogy, the written records of Djedkhonsefankh's ancestry probably did not go much further back than the end of the 20th Dynasty, at which point the genealogist had to resort to a generalized description of a lineage corresponding in length to the great king-lists. This statue, then, not only exemplifies a written representation of the past, but also provides evidence of an oral tradition of genealogies which covered the full extent of human time.⁹⁴

THE EGYPTIAN MIRAGE: LATE EGYPTIAN RELATIONS WITH THE PAST

Several elements in Herodotus' representation of the meeting between the two Greek historians and the Theban priests do correlate with the evidence of Egyptian king-lists and genealogies. What is more significant, however, than the relative accuracy of these elements in Herodotus' narrative is the fact that they are themselves representations created by members of a particular society at a given historical moment, who had their own intentions and motivations. The drama of Herodotus' meeting with the Theban priests is more than a Greek's exoticizing evocation of the wonders of Egypt. It is, in fact, the priests themselves who presented their own past and the vast expanses of Egyptian chronology. Herodotus says they "did to Hecataeus what they did to me," when they led him into the great hall of statues.⁹⁵ These genealogies were part of a priestly self-presentation particular to late Egyptian culture that continued through the Persian period in which Herodotus made his inquiries.⁹⁶ Hereditary succession in

⁹⁴ A wealth of comparative evidence on the widespread tendency in various genealogical traditions to construct an extended father/son succession is presented by Henige 1974: 71–94. Wiedemann 1890: 509, Fehling 1989: 80 and others have criticized Herodotus' account, noting that the great temple of Amun at Karnak goes back only to the 12th Dynasty. West 1991: 148 allows that local tradition may have exaggerated the age of the temple, and that "we may reasonably surmise . . . a belief in the hereditary succession to the priesthood as immemorial custom." There is no need merely to surmise, however, in light of the evidence from the genealogical text of Djedkhonsefankh.

⁹⁵ Hdt. 143.1: "Previously, when the historian Hecataeus was in Thebes, the Egyptian priests . . . did to him what they also did to me" (πρότερον δὲ Ἑκαταίῳ τῷ λογοποιοῦν ἐν Θήβῃσι . . . ἐποίησαν οἱ ἱερεῖς τοῦ Διὸς οἷον τι καὶ ἐμοί).

⁹⁶ That the practice of extended genealogical representations continued into the Persian period when Herodotus made his visit is shown by the inscription of Khnumibre, who traces an elaborate fictive genealogy back twenty-four generations. Khnumibre was a priest at Heliopolis and Memphis, as well as an overseer of works, who took care to link his genealogy with famous builders of the Nubian period and the New Kingdom. See Posener 1936: 98–105. Extensive genealogies are also found in the Ptolemaic period. Thompson 88: 204 n. 7 cites a genealogy of masons in the Apis cult at Memphis which stretches back twelve generations.

the priesthood became well established relatively late in Egyptian history, in the Third Intermediate Period, and extended genealogies on non-royal stelae and statue inscriptions only became common at this time. At Thebes, in particular, the departure of the pharaonic household from its New Kingdom capital in the 20th Dynasty meant the diminished importance of royal patronage for securing and maintaining rank and office. Thus, tenure of priestly office probably came to depend more on tradition and inheritance.⁹⁷ With the rise to power of Soshenq I, inaugurating the 22nd Dynasty, there began a period of Libyan influence in the rule of Egypt. The importance of the segmentary lineage system in the Libyan chiefdoms influenced the Libyan dynasts' appointments to various offices, including the priesthoods. Since the traditional sources of wealth and social prestige for families of Egyptian descent were threatened by appointments based on Libyan hereditary kinship, lengthy and detailed genealogies became a means for élite Egyptian families to reassert their claims to positions in the priesthoods.⁹⁸ This emphasis on the hereditary principle in appointments to the priesthoods eventually led to the system of inheritance observed by Herodotus at 2.37.5. The cultural practice that lies behind Herodotus' account of the 345 generations of Theban priests is, therefore, conditioned by particular historical circumstances, and is one element in changing relations with the past that the Egyptians themselves experienced in the later periods of their history.

When Herodotus toured Egypt, probably during the latter part of the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE), he encountered an Egyptian culture that had been shaped by the turmoil of the Third Intermediate Period, the revival of fortunes under the Saïtes, and almost a century of Persian domination.⁹⁹ Egyptians' cultural awareness of their own past had undergone profound changes. In the case of the extensive priestly genealogies discussed earlier, the turn to the past was a response to specific political and social disruptions occasioned by the decline of the 20th Dynasty and

⁹⁷ See Redford 1970: 5–6 and 1986a: 318–19.

⁹⁸ Ritner 1994: 219; Ritner 2009: 2–3; in general, see Lloyd 1975–88: 2.171, 3.109; Grimal 1992: 319–31. Libyan Period (and also Saïte) genealogies often trace ancestry back to a royal name, and then stop or shift to a collateral branch, having asserted a connection to the royal family. See Redford 1986a: 62. Note also the relatively frequent connections to the royal house in the genealogies discussed by Legrain 1905: 72–82.

⁹⁹ See above for a very brief overview. On this period, see Lloyd 1983; Grimal 1992: 319–71. The classic study of the Saïte and Persian periods is Kienitz 1953: esp. 5–66. For the probable date of Herodotus' visit, see Jacoby 1913: 265–67; How and Wells 1912: 411; Wells 1923: 177–82, influenced by Bauer 1878, argued contrary to Jacoby that Herodotus visited Egypt between 425 and 415, and that the second book was written later than the rest. For more recent discussions of the dating, see Sansone 1985, and Evans 1987.

the period of Libyan rule. In a variety of forms of cultural expression, however, a more general archaizing tendency is detectable in the Late Period, especially in the Saïte dynasty.¹⁰⁰ Pharaohs such as Apries, Psammetichus II, and Amasis began to use versions of royal titlature based on models from the Old Kingdom.¹⁰¹ Biographical texts and funerary inscriptions included epithets which had not been used since the Middle and Old Kingdoms, as well as official titles that had been revived after a lapse of a thousand years.¹⁰² Hieroglyphic inscriptions recalled archaic orthography, and verb forms from Middle Egyptian reappeared in inscriptions based on ancient models.¹⁰³ The turn toward the past was evident in the revival of older funerary formulae, and the imitation of the Pyramid Texts in tomb inscriptions. Art of this period also showed a great concern for the imitation of styles and forms from earlier periods,¹⁰⁴ and the stories of Late Period narrative literature often centered on historical or semi-historical figures of the distant past.¹⁰⁵

The social and political causes for this self-conscious reorientation toward the distant past were undoubtedly complex, and changed with the historical circumstances. Nevertheless, a general pattern of cultivating links between the present and Egypt's past did emerge, whether as

¹⁰⁰ On this phenomenon, see Nagy 1973 and Brunner 1970. Jan Assmann traces critical elements in the formation of this Egyptian *Vergangenheitsbewußtsein* to an even earlier period, when Egypt was at the height of its political power and influence in the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Under the Ramessides, Assmann argues, the first steps were taken towards a comprehensive codification and canonization of the Egyptian past (1991: 305–7, 312). The “Saïte renaissance,” however, was not merely a continuation of Ramesside classicism, but a new turn to the past in new circumstances, an archaism that often revived Old Kingdom and Middle Kingdom cultural phenomena that had disappeared in the New Kingdom.

¹⁰¹ Lloyd 1983: 288.

¹⁰² Among the most frequent of these archaizing titles was *hwp hwt-nt* (“Governor of the Mansion of the Red Crown”), which was common in the Old Kingdom, declined in the Middle Kingdom, and then disappeared until the Saïte period. See Nagy 1973: 53–59; Brunner 1970: 152–54. The Late Period revival of the use of “beautiful name” (*im nfr*) also hearkened back to an Old Kingdom precedent (de Meulenaere 1966).

¹⁰³ These included the *sgm-f*, *sgm-n-f*, *sgm pw ir-n-f* forms and the negation *nfr-n*; see the references in Nagy 1973: 60 nn. 85–87; see also Brunner 1970: 154–55 who notes that the use of single consonant signs in Nectanebo's Naucratis Stele of 377 BCE, though previously interpreted as a sign of Greek influence, is actually due to conscious archaism based on Old Kingdom orthographic models (see also Vittmann 2003: 219). For a study of these linguistic archaisms, see Der Manuelian 1994, reviewed by Ray 1996.

¹⁰⁴ Nagy 1973: 60–63; Der Manuelian 1994: 18–58; Morkot 2003: 79–95. Reliefs depicting Djoser from the subterranean rooms of the Step Pyramid complex at Saqqara were covered with a grid for copying in the Saïte period (Morkot 2003: 85–86). See Baines and Riggs 2001 for an example of a late period royal statue (London, BM EA 941) modeled on the serdab statue of Djoser from Saqqara. Bianchi 1982: 947 argues that Late Period artistic tendencies continued into the Persian period.

¹⁰⁵ Loprieno 2003: 150–52.

cultural resistance to repeated foreign incursions, or – in the case of the Saïte dynasty – as the self-assertion of a newly reunified Egypt looking to its past to recover the purest expressions of its cultural traditions.¹⁰⁶ The distant past which acted as the guarantor of present legitimacy no longer had to be situated only in the “first time” (*sp tpy*) of mythical origins. As H. Brunner has argued, the fundamental significance of archaizing in the Late Period was the anchoring of Egyptian identity in individuals and cultural forms of the historical past.¹⁰⁷ The mythical *Urzeit* did not, of course, cease to be relevant, but a *human* past of great kings and wise sages could now provide a counterbalance to more recent misfortunes which had disrupted the integrity of the pharaoh as divine representative, and the sanctity and unity of the Two Lands.

This fundamental and novel orientation to the human historical past was continued into the Persian period and beyond. The Saïte dynasty itself became a more immediate historical reference point after the Persian conquest. The rebel Inaros presented himself as the son of Psammetichus, connecting himself with the period of Egyptian revival. Another local dynast in the Delta, who sent shipments of wheat to Athens in 445/4 BCE, also went under the name of Psammetichus. The past served a propagandistic function in an age of foreign domination by recalling the glories of Egypt's native kings. The Bentresh stela, discovered near Karnak, purports to be a monument of Rameses II, though its portrayal of Egypt at the height of its power and influence in the Near East was in fact produced in the Persian or Ptolemaic period.¹⁰⁸ In the Satrap Stele (311 BCE), the

¹⁰⁶ On the various interpretations of the “Saïte renaissance” and archaizing tendencies in the Late Period, see Brunner 1970: 155–57; Der Manuelian 1994: xxxv–xxxix. Assmann 1991: 305, in general, associates the turn to the past in the Late Period with the experience of foreign rule. Lloyd 1983: 289 sees Saïte archaizing as a propagandistic effort to restore or at least recall the glories of Egypt's past.

¹⁰⁷ “Das in dem *sp tpy* begründete Heil glaubt man nun in der historischen Vergangenheit fassen zu können.” Brunner 1970: 160; see also his succinct summation at p. 161: “die eigentliche Wurzel des Archaismus aber ist die Verwechslung der mythischen Urzeit mit der historischen Vergangenheit.” See also Loprieno 2003, who posits a “binary” approach to history in the Late Period that is both mythical and historical/documentary.

¹⁰⁸ The narrative opens with Rameses receiving tribute in Mitanni on the Upper Euphrates, and taking a princess of Bakhtan as a royal wife. Later, the younger sister of the king's new wife falls ill, and the ruler of Bakhtan sends to Rameses for help. The Egyptian king sends his royal scribe Thorhemheb to diagnose the malady, and the princess Bentresh is ultimately healed. This narrative serves multiple functions. It extols the miraculous power of the god Khons, the benevolence of Rameses II, and the medical knowledge of Egyptian scribes. For translations, notes and additional references, see Lichtheim 1980: 90–94 and Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 361–66. Other texts also exhibit the Late Period Egyptian concern with the past, e.g. the Shabaka stone which purports to record the Memphite theology from an ancient crumbling papyrus. For an English translation, see Lichtheim 1973: 51–58, though note Junge 1973, who disputes the dating of the “ancient” text.

Egyptian priesthood was careful to align the benefactions of Ptolemy son of Lagus with an Egyptian view of the past. His grant of estate lands to the divinities of Buto was portrayed as a restoration of a previous grant which had been overturned by the hated Persian king Xerxes.¹⁰⁹ Likewise, the great Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, built between 237 and 142 BCE, was founded not only on the precedent of divine creation, as was conventional, but also with reference to previous temples established on the site. The inscriptions indicate that the new temple was built on the site of a predecessor from the time of Khufu (ca. 2650 BCE), which had been rebuilt under Thutmosis III (ca. 1450). In earlier periods, the site of the temple's innermost sanctuary was identified with the *benben* mound which first arose from the primordial flood waters in the creation of the world.¹¹⁰ In the later periods of Egyptian history, however, texts were composed to connect the temple with both mythical and historical time.¹¹¹

The propagandistic use of the past in Late Egyptian self-representation is also apparent in Herodotus' account of pharaonic history before the rise of Psammetichus. Herodotus, as I have mentioned, identifies the Egyptians, and especially priests, as his primary source for the entire period from the first king Min to the reign of the priest Sethos.¹¹² It is not surprising, therefore, that Herodotus' material includes anecdotes and legends glorifying the achievements of Egypt's great kings which were undoubtedly current among his informants.¹¹³ In Herodotus' account of early pharaonic history, the Egyptian glorification of the past focuses on the figure of Sesostris, an

¹⁰⁹ See Goedicke 1985; for further references and an English translation, see Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 392–97.

¹¹⁰ Assmann 1991: 305; Assmann 1992: 9–10, 24–25; the temple of Edfu did, nevertheless, include traditional architectural references to the creation (see Finnestad 1997: 204–12), but the double reference to both mythical and human or historical time in the inscription shows the concern with anchoring the temple in *hoc tempus* as well as *illud tempus* (for these terms, see Eliade 1954).

¹¹¹ Another variety of this Late Egyptian use of the past is found in the so-called “Famine Stele.” This text is a pseudepigraphical inscription, which purports to date from the time of Djoser, and tells the tale of a famine which was averted by the miraculous intervention of the god Khnum. The stele was likely set up in the Ptolemaic period by the priests of Khnum, who were anxious to protect their revenues and privileges in a time of competition with the temple of Isis at Philae. For English translations, see Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 386–91.

¹¹² Herodotus makes a clear distinction between his sources for the period from Min to Sethos, and those for the dodecarchy and the Saïte dynasty: “Up to this point in the account, the Egyptians and the priests spoke, pointing out that 341 human generations have been born from the first king to this last priest of Hephaistos” (2.142.1); “These things the Egyptians themselves say, but what other people say and what the Egyptians in agreement with others say happened in this land, I shall now relate – with a bit added from my own observation” (2.147.1).

¹¹³ Cf. Froidefond 1971: 161–62. On the Egyptian popular tradition in Herodotus more generally, see Spiegelberg 1927: 18–37; Froidefond 1971: 181–87; Weeks 1977; Evans 1991: 134–40. Even less favorable stories may have derived from Egyptian narrative traditions. The Pheros story, known from Hdt. 2.111, Diod. Sic. 1.59 and Plin. *HN* 36.74, is attested as a short story in the Petese story cycle in a Demotic papyrus dated ca. 100 CE (Ryholt 2006: 31–58).

historical reminiscence of two exceedingly energetic and capable kings of the same name, along with a mixture of elements from other reigns, folklore, and propagandistic exaggeration.¹¹⁴ As a legendary figure of Egypt's past greatness, he would become the subject of Egyptian narrative fiction in both Demotic and Greek that was read as late as the Roman period.¹¹⁵ In addition to numerous building projects and administrative innovations, Sesostris was credited with victorious expeditions to the Arabian Gulf, Asia, Scythia, Thrace, and Colchis. Egyptian territory and political influence were, in fact, extended in the reigns of Sesostris I and Sesostris III, but their military expeditions went no further than Nubia and Syro-Palestine.¹¹⁶ Naturally, the exploits of Sesostris as related to Herodotus by the Egyptian priests were not faithful records of a particular king's activities. Rather, they were part of Egyptian efforts to construct an identity in the past to rival the accomplishments of those who afflicted them in the present. The emphasis on Sesostris as a representative of Egypt's past is intended to provide an example of a king whose successful campaigns extended Egyptian territory as far as the Second Cataract and far surpassed Cambyses' disastrous attempt to invade Nubia.¹¹⁷ The attempt to palliate present defeat through the past triumphs of Sesostris is made explicit in the tale of Darius' thwarted desire to place images of himself before those of Sesostris at the temple of Hephaestus at Memphis:

τῶν δὴ ὁ ἱεὺς τοῦ Ἥφαιστου χρόνῳ μετέπειτα πολλῶι Δαρεῖον τὸν Πέρσην οὐ περιεΐδε ἰστάντα ἔμπροσθε ἀνδριάντα, φᾶς οὐ οἱ πεποιῆσθαι ἔργα οἷά περ Σεσώστρι τῶι Αἰγυπτίῳ. Σέσωστριν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα τε καταστρέψασθαι ἔθνεα οὐκ ἑλάσσω ἐκείνου καὶ δὴ καὶ Σκύθας, Δαρεῖον δὲ οὐ δυνασθῆναι Σκύθας ἐλεῖν. οὐκ ὧν δίκαιον εἶναι ἰστάναι ἔμπροσθε τῶν ἐκείνου ἀναθημάτων μὴ οὐκ ὑπερβαλόμενον τοῖσι ἔργοισι. Δαρεῖον μὲν νυν λέγουσι πρὸς ταῦτα συγγνώμην ποιῆσασθαι.

Long afterwards, the priest of Hephaestus would not permit Darius the Persian to set up a statue in front of these, saying that he had not accomplished deeds as great as those of Sesostris the Egyptian. For Sesostris had subdued nations no less than

¹¹⁴ Sesostris (Senwosret) was the name of three kings of the 12th Dynasty (ca. 1991–1785 BCE). Sesostris I and Sesostris III were the most active of these, conquering Nubia and strengthening Egyptian influence in the Near East, as well as presiding over extensive building programs within Egypt. See Lloyd 1975–88: 3.16–37; on the historical activities of these kings, see Grimal 1992: 161–70.

¹¹⁵ The Demotic stories are discussed by Widmer 2002: 387–93; for the Greek Sesonchosis Romance, see Stephens and Winkler 1995: 246–66. For an earlier account of the tradition in general, see Malaise 1966.

¹¹⁶ Material evidence of Egyptian influence in the 12th Dynasty extends as far as Megiddo, Ras-Shamra, and the region of modern Ankara. Grimal 1992: 165.

¹¹⁷ Hdt. 3.17–26. See Lloyd 1975–88: 3.36; see also Ray 1988: 264. Obsomer 1989 argues against this interpretation with an elaborate reconstruction of the transmission and distortion of information from particular stelae of Sesostris III, but his case is unconvincing.

he, and also the Scythians, while Darius was not able to conquer the Scythians. Thus it was not right that he should erect a statue in front of those of one whose accomplishments he had not surpassed. Darius, they say, agreed to this.¹¹⁸

In the stories of Sesostris, it becomes clear that Egyptian awareness of the past in the Persian period was cultivated as a focus for representations of resistance to a foreign ruler.¹¹⁹

In other words, it was not simply the marvel of a massive expanse of time that Herodotus encountered in Egypt, but a mediated cultural awareness of that time. Herodotus did not confront the *archaic* civilization of ancient Egypt, but rather the *archaizing* civilization of his own era. Though earlier periods had seen the formulation of a canonical Egyptian culture based on models from a bygone era,¹²⁰ the Egyptian consciousness of the past changed and intensified under the historical conditions of the Late Period. The human past became not only a paradigm of cultural perfection, but also a discursive means of constructing identity and legitimacy. What Herodotus encountered in Egypt, therefore, was not a static, archaic society, but one actively engaged in creating and representing a relationship to the human historical past.

HERODOTUS' USE OF THE EGYPTIAN MIRAGE

In Herodotus' story of his encounter at Thebes, the priests emphasized an Egyptian word in the demonstration of their country's long chronology, focusing attention on the most important characteristic of the past with which Herodotus' informants presented him. The Egyptians contested Hecataeus' genealogy, in which he traced his ancestry back to a god after only sixteen generations, by showing him 345 statues of human priests:

Ἑκαταίῳ δὲ γενεηλογήσαντι ἑωυτὸν καὶ ἀναδήσαντι ἐς ἑκαιδέκατον θεὸν ἀντεγενεηλόγησαν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀριθμήσει, οὐ δεκόμενοι παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ θεοῦ γενέσθαι ἄνθρωπον· ἀντεγενεηλόγησαν δὲ ὧδε, φάμενοι ἕκαστον τῶν κολοσσῶν πύργῳ ἐκ πυργώμιος γεγονέναι, ἐς ὃ τοὺς πέντε καὶ τεσσαράκοντα καὶ τριηκοσίους ἀπέδεξαν κολοσσούς, καὶ οὔτε ἐς θεὸν οὔτε ἐς ἥρωα ἀνέδησαν αὐτούς. πύργῳ δὲ ἐστὶ κατ' Ἑλλάδα γλῶσσαν καλὸς κάγαθος. ἥδη ὦν τῶν αἰ

¹¹⁸ Hdt. 2.110.2–3.

¹¹⁹ Lloyd 1975–88: 3.18–19 notes that this pattern was continued in later versions of the Sesostris legend, in which his conquests were considerably expanded, especially to the east, in order to rival those of Alexander the Great. Diod. Sic. 1.53.5 reports that Sesostris was sent by his father to Arabia in order to subdue it, and (at 1.55.2) that his fleet subdued coastal peoples as far as India. Cf. Strabo 15.1.6, 16.4.4.

¹²⁰ See above n. 100.

εἰκόνες ἦσαν, τοιούτους ἀπεδείκνυσάν σφεας πάντας ἐόντας, θεῶν δὲ πολλὸν ἀπαλλαγμένους.

When Hecataeus recited his genealogy, and traced it back to a god in the sixteenth generation, they disputed his genealogy with regard to the number, denying his claim that a man could be born of a god. They disputed his genealogy thus, saying that each of the statues was a *pirōmis* born from a *pirōmis*, until they had gone through the 345 statues, and made no connection either with god or hero. *Pirōmis* in the Greek language means “gentleman.” And so they directly showed that all those whom the images represented were such, and far from being gods.¹²¹

The word *πίρωμις* is a Greek phonetic rendering of the Egyptian noun *rmṯ* (“man”) and the definite article *pṣ*, which becomes *πρωμις* in Coptic (φίρωμι in the Bohairic dialect). The slight mistranslation “gentleman” (καλὸς κἀγαθός) suggests that each statue may actually have been described as *pṣ rmṯ* ³ (lit. “the great man”), an expression which becomes the standard term for a “man of importance” in Late Egyptian, though in some circumstances *pṣ rmṯ* alone also had this meaning.¹²² What is most important to the anecdote’s narrative, however, and to the refutation of Hecataeus’ claims, is the fact that the Egyptians claim to have recorded 345 generations of a *human* past, without once resorting to any connection with a divinity or hero.¹²³ This emphasis on the human past echoes Herodotus’ previous summation of the pharaonic chronology presented to him by the Egyptian priests: according to Herodotus’ (misguided) calculations, the Egyptian priests have records of a past stretching back more than eleven millennia without a single instance of a god assuming human form.¹²⁴ While it is

¹²¹ Hdt. 2.143.4–144.1. In some manuscripts, there is after *κολοσσούς* in 2.143.4 an additional phrase emphasizing the word *pirōmis*: either *πίρωμιν ἐκ πῖρῳμιος γενόμενον* or *πίρωμιν ἐπονομαζόμενον*. The second phrase was retained by Rosén 1987, though both were deleted by Stein 1902, who was followed by Hude 1927 and others, including Lloyd 1975–88.

¹²² Crum 1939: 294b–295a (πρωμις); 296a (πρωμις); see also Vycichl 1983: 172–73; for *pṣ rmṯ* in the sense of “man of importance,” see Erman and Grapow 1926–63: 2.422.10; discussion of *πίρωμις* in Spiegelberg 1927: 9; Lloyd 1975–88: 3.110; Wiedemann 1890: 510 noted that the personal name *Πίρωμις* is mentioned in an inscription from Halicarnassus (*SIG*⁴ 46.19, 32), suggesting that Herodotus may have learned this word there. The resemblance to the word is probably coincidental. See Zgusta 1964: 432.

¹²³ Note the example of Pasenhor, who traces his lineage back fifteen generations and makes connections not to divinities but human kings (Malinine, Posener, and Vercoutter 1968: 30–31, no. 31, pl. x; see also von Beckerath 1997: 30–31).

¹²⁴ Hdt. 2.142.3. On Herodotus’ miscalculations, see above, n. 81. In an earlier mention of the Egyptian king-list, Herodotus likewise qualifies the generations of kings as human (2.100.1): “After this, the priests read out the names of another 330 kings. In so many *human* generations, eighteen were Ethiopians, one was a native *woman*, and the rest were Egyptian *men*” (μετὰ δὲ τούτων κατέλεγον οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐκ βύβλου ἄλλων βασιλέων τριηκοσίων τε καὶ τριήκοντα οὐνόματα. ἐν τούτοις δὲ γενεῇσι ἀνθρώπων ὀκτωκαίδεκα μὲν Αἰθίοπες ἦσαν, μία δὲ *γυνή* ἐπιχωρή, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι ἄνδρες Αἰγύπτιοι).

true that according to the Egyptians, the gods did at one time rule on earth, this age is pushed much farther back in time than could be imagined by the Greeks.¹²⁵ The Egyptian division between *hoc tempus* and *illud tempus* does not exist a mere sixteen generations in the past, but is placed far earlier than the earliest Greek accounts of interactions between gods and men. What Herodotus presented for his readers, therefore, was an encounter that reoriented the Greek imagination toward its own mythical past.¹²⁶

Herodotus adopted the perspective offered by this Late Egyptian awareness of the human past in order to critique those whom he sees as his Greek predecessors and rivals. The criticism is twofold, focusing on Greek genealogical accounts of human relations to the gods, and on Greek mythologizing accounts of the past generally. In the first case, his rhetorical target is obviously the Ionian logographer Hecataeus, whom he portrays as the ignorant Greek in the tale of the priests' statues. Herodotus disavows Hecataeus' profession, saying explicitly that he refrained from 'genealogizing' though he too was shown the statues in Thebes. Hecataeus himself, of course, adopted a critical position with regard to Greek tales in the proem to his *Genealogies* (also known as *Histories* or *Herōlogia*), declaring that he writes down those which seem to him true, since the *logoi* of the Greeks are many and foolish.¹²⁷ As Hartog has pointed out, however, the critical distance which separates Hecataeus from his material is minimal.¹²⁸ When there is evidence of his method, he seems to rely on the principle of "common sense" (δοκεῖν) announced in the opening statement of his work.¹²⁹ Hecataeus' most significant contribution to the development of Greek historical thought was the construction of complete genealogies bridging the gap between present historical time and the mythical-genealogical past, a move perhaps itself inspired by his own experience of Late Egyptian constructions of the past.¹³⁰ Herodotus, however, takes a more critical position

¹²⁵ Hdt. 2.144.1.

¹²⁶ On the importance of the encounter between the Greek historians and the Egyptian priests for the development of a *spatium historicum*, see von Leyden 1949–50: esp. 90–93. For a more recent overview and survey of scholarship on this issue, see Cobet 2002: esp. pp. 401–2, 408–11 on the significance of Egypt in Herodotus' construction of historical time.

¹²⁷ *FGrH* 1 F1.

¹²⁸ Following an anthropological distinction between *exegesis*, a commentary on tradition from within a culture, and *interpretation*, an external discourse which demands a certain critical distance, he notes that "avec Hécatee l'interprétation, si interprétation il y a, est toute proche encore de l'exégèse" (Hartog 1989: 125, citing M. Detienne, *L'invention de la mythologie* (Paris, 1981): 13).

¹²⁹ Hartog 1989: 126.

¹³⁰ Bertelli 1998 has suggested that this resulted in the "desacralization" of mythical time, a crucial step in the development of a critical approach to traditions concerning the past.

with regard to Greek myth and genealogy by adopting the humanized Late Egyptian view of the past. Several centuries later, this perspective earned him Plutarch's accusation of "philobarbarism."¹³¹ Nevertheless, the Egyptian *logos* established a space in which Herodotus could conduct a self-reflexive critique of Greek relations to *illud tempus*, that time of beginnings and origins, a critique which contributed to a developing Greek historical consciousness.

While Herodotus represents Hecataeus as a key rival to his own historiographical project in genealogy, mythological traditions of the Greek past are implicitly embodied in Homer and the poets of the epic cycle.¹³² Indeed, in his introductory account of the origins of enmity between Greece and Eastern barbarians Herodotus offers rationalizing Persian and Phoenician versions of the causes of the Trojan War, ordinarily the purview of epic.¹³³ In the Egyptian *logos*, Herodotus takes up the story of Helen's abduction once again, and Homeric myth is rationalized within the framework of an Egyptian chronology of human kings. The mantic sea god Proteus whom Menelaus encounters off the coast of Egypt on the island of Pharos becomes an Egyptian pharaoh.¹³⁴ Thon, the husband of Polydamna, the Egyptian woman who gave Helen the miraculous *nēpenthes* drug, becomes Proteus' coastal warden Thonis, who reports Paris' crime when he is forced onto Egyptian shores.¹³⁵ Herodotus relates a version of the story that Helen never went to Troy at all,¹³⁶ in which Proteus acts as the just king,

¹³¹ The epithet φιλοβάρβαρος is introduced when Plutarch (*Mor.* 857a) discusses Herodotus' rationalization of Greek myth on the basis of the Egyptian temporal perspective.

¹³² On one of only two occasions Herodotus uses the word μῦθος, he links it to Homer and other early poets. In rejecting explanations of the flooding of the Nile linked to the river Ocean, Herodotus (2.23) writes: "The one who mentioned the Ocean referred his tale back to something invisible and it cannot be disproved. For I myself do not know that there is any river Ocean, but I think that Homer or some other earlier poet found the name and introduced it into his poetry" (ὁ δὲ περὶ τοῦ Ὠκεανοῦ λέξας ἐξ ἀφανῆς τὸν μῦθον ἀνείikas οὐκ ἔχει ἔλεγχον· οὐ γὰρ τινα ἔγωγε οἶδα ποταμὸν Ὠκεανὸν ἔοντα, Ὅμηρον δὲ ἢ τινα τῶν πρότερον γενομένων ποιητῶν δοκέω τοῦτομα εὐρόντα ἐς ποιήσιν ἐσενεῖκασθαι). The other use of the μῦθος also occurs in the second book, and is discussed below.

¹³³ Hdt. 1.1–5.

¹³⁴ Hom. *Od.* 4.351–570; Hdt. 2.112–19; Herodotus does not mention any Egyptian name with which this king is to be identified, stating explicitly that Proteus is his Greek name (ἄνδρα Μεμφίτην, τῷ κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλήνων γλώσσαν οὐνομα Πρωτέα εἶναι (2.112.1)). Lloyd 1975–88: 3.43–44 has refuted earlier attempts to derive the name Proteus from the Egyptian *P3-rwty*. In Euripides' *Helen*, produced in 412 BCE, Proteus is also depicted as a benevolent king in contrast to his son Theoclymenus, though in this version Helen is spirited away to Egypt by Hermes and an image of her went to Troy.

¹³⁵ Hom. *Od.* 4.227–32; Hdt. 2.113–15.

¹³⁶ The story that Helen remained in Egypt is first found in Stesichorus' palinode on Helen (*PMG* 192 = Pl. *Phdr.* 243a; see also *PMG* 193 = *P. Oxy.* 2506, fr. 26, col. i). The tale may have appeared earlier in Hesiod, since he mentions Helen's phantom travelling to Troy in her place (fr. 358, M–W).

safeguarding Helen and the property stolen from Menelaus, and sending Paris on his way back to Troy. Homer's references to Helen's visit with Thon and Polydamna and to Menelaus' sojourn in Egypt, Herodotus claims, show that he was also aware of this version of the story of Helen's abduction, though he chose to reject it as unsuitable for epic poetry.¹³⁷ Herodotus here distinguishes the mythical material of Homer from that of his own narrative, and thereby offers an implicit definition of the mode in which he is writing about the past. Aligning himself with the long human chronology then current in Late Period Egypt, he sets the legendary figures of Homeric poetry in a temporal landscape where the principle of τὸ εἰκός ("likelihood", or "reasonable probability") operates – a landscape continuous with the present day. This is the principle on which he accepts this version of Helen's abduction and the Trojan War (which he claims the Egyptian priests gave him),¹³⁸ arguing that Priam would not have been so foolish as to endure years of war and the deaths of so many of his children and fellow Trojans, simply to allow Paris and Helen to continue living together.¹³⁹

An even more direct critique of Greek myth occurs earlier in the second book of the *Histories*, as Herodotus considers the tale of Heracles' visit to Egypt and his near death as a human sacrifice. Aside from a previous reference to an account of the river Ocean as a "myth" (μῦθος), also in the second book, this is the only time Herodotus uses the word to describe Greek mythical notions.¹⁴⁰ The negative sense in which he uses μῦθος is

¹³⁷ Hdt. 2.116.1: "It seems to me that Homer also knew this story, but since it was not as suitable for epic, he used the other one, and rejected it, while having revealed that he also knew this story" (δοκέει δέ μοι καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυνθέσθαι· ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐπιοποίησιν εὐπρεπὴς ἦν τῷ ἑτέρῳ τῷ περ ἐχρήσατο, [ἐς δὲ] μετῆκε αὐτόν, δηλώσας ὡς καὶ τοῦτον ἐπίσταιτο τὸν λόγον).

¹³⁸ Lloyd 1975–88: 3.46 notes that Herodotus, if he got the tale from the priests at all, probably extracted it with a series of leading questions. The tradition most likely existed previously. Some scholars have suggested that the "Inaros–Petubastis Cycle" of Demotic narratives reveals familiarity with the Homeric poems, but there has been considerable debate over this interpretation. Some connection with Greek literature is plausible, but it is difficult to determine how far back this familiarity could be traced, since the earliest papyrus manuscripts date to the late Ptolemaic period. See Volten 1956; Hoffmann 1996; Vittmann 1998: 66–68, 75–77; Thissen 1999.

¹³⁹ In this case, Herodotus is using the rhetorical arguments of the contemporary Greek law court to refute the Greek version of events, and in the process drawing a distinction between mythical and historical accounts of the past. On the argument κατὰ τὸ εἰκός as part of contemporary sophistic rhetoric, see Goldhill 2002: 49–50. For the significance of this critique of Homer, see also Cobet 2002: 408–9. In discussing the foundations of the oracles at Siwa and Dodona, Herodotus (2.55–58) also attributes the rationalizing argument to the Egyptian priests, and the mythical version to the Greeks, reconciling the two by offering rationalizations of the Greek account on the basis of the Egyptian.

¹⁴⁰ See n. 132 above.

clear from the manner in which he introduces the story: "The Greeks tell many other tales uncritically. One of the foolish ones is this *myth* they tell about Heracles . . ." ¹⁴¹ The story is that the Egyptians garlanded Heracles and led him off to be sacrificed to Zeus. At first he remained calm, but then as they approached the altar, he exerted his strength and killed all those present. Herodotus refutes this myth with an argument according to reasonable probability (κατὰ τὸ εἰκός). Anyone who knows anything about the nature and customs of the Egyptians, he argues, knows it would be impossible for them to perform human sacrifice, since they are permitted to sacrifice only rams, sheep, and cattle that have been inspected for purity, along with geese. The story told by the Greeks could not have taken place, since it is contrary to both the nature (φύσις) and the customs (νόμοι) of the Egyptians. Herodotus, therefore, establishes the importance of understanding Egyptian customs, as well as his own expert position in regard to other Greeks. The second argument he offers for why the tale is unlikely is the φύσις of Heracles: he is a man. He is not physically capable of killing tens of thousands of people, as the myth says he did. ¹⁴²

This human figure of Heracles, bound by present-day constraints of what a human being can reasonably be expected to do, is central to Herodotus' reconciliation of Greek and Egyptian chronologies, and his renegotiation of the boundary between *illud tempus* and *hoc tempus* in the Greek consciousness of the past. Just prior to his refutation of the myth of Heracles' visit to Egypt, Herodotus explores various traditions on the age of Heracles. The Egyptian Heracles, he learned from the priests, is one of the most ancient of the Egyptian gods, being one of the twelve who formed a second generation of gods after an original eight some 17,000 years before the time of Amasis. Of the Greek Heracles, Herodotus says he could find nothing at all in Egypt. Nevertheless, the Greeks derived the name Heracles from the Egyptians and used this name for the son of Amphitryon and Alcmene. By traveling to sanctuaries in Tyre and on Thasos, Herodotus confirmed that the worship of Heracles was very ancient – more ancient than the usual Greek reckonings, which were undoubtedly based on genealogies. The correct solution to this dilemma, Herodotus suggests, lies in the practice of those who have founded double temples to Heracles. ¹⁴³ In one they sacrifice to him as an immortal with the epithet "Olympian," and in the other they

¹⁴¹ Hdt. 2.45.1: λέγουσι δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ἀνεπισκέπτως οἱ Ἕλληνες· εὐήθης δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ ὁδε ὁ μῦθος ἐστὶ τὸν περὶ Ἡρακλέους λέγουσι . . .

¹⁴² Hdt. 2.45.2–3. On the Greek Busiris tradition, see the overview in Livingstone 2001: 77–90 and Vasunia 2001: 183–215.

¹⁴³ Hdt. 2.44.5.

sacrifice to him as a hero. Herodotus is not proposing that the hero and the Olympian Heracles are two aspects of the same divinity, but rather that they are two distinct figures. The latter is the ancient and divine Heracles, known to the Egyptians and others, while the former is the human son of Alcmene and Amphitryon honored as a hero, who is much more recent and whose name is derived from the ancient divinity.

The implications of this move become clear later, when Herodotus returns to the question of the relative antiquity of Greek and Egyptian gods following the anecdote of Hecataeus and the Theban priests. In the time prior to the 345 human generations of high priests and kings, the gods did, in fact, rule Egypt, but whereas the Egyptians consider Heracles, Dionysus, and Pan among the oldest of the Egyptian pantheon, these same divinities are the youngest of the Greek gods. Dionysus is supposed by the Greeks to have lived 1,600 years before Herodotus' day, Heracles 900 years, and Pan a mere 800 years. Though the notion of a double Heracles solves one chronological problem, the Greek traditions regarding the other two gods require Herodotus ultimately to settle on a different solution:

εἰ μὲν γὰρ φανεροί τε ἐγένετο καὶ κατεγήρασαν καὶ οὗτοι ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι, κατὰ περ Ἡρακλῆς ὁ ἐξ Ἀμφιτρώωνος γενόμενος καὶ δὴ καὶ Διόνυσος ὁ ἐκ Σεμέλης καὶ Πάν ὁ ἐκ Πηνελόπτης γενόμενος, ἔφη ἂν τις καὶ τούτους ἄλλους γενομένους ἄνδρας ἔχειν τὰ ἐκείνων οὐνόματα τῶν προγεγονότων θεῶν· νῦν δὲ Διόνυσόν τε λέγουσι οἱ Ἕλληνες ὡς αὐτίκα γενόμενον ἐς τὸν μηρὸν ἐνεργράψατο Ζεὺς καὶ ἤνεικε ἐς Νύσαν τὴν ὑπὲρ Αἰγύπτου ἐοῦσαν ἐν τῇ Αἰθιοπίῃ, καὶ Πανὸς γε πέρι οὐκ ἔχουσι εἰπεῖν ὅκη ἐτράπετο γενόμενος. δῆλα ὦν μοι γέγονε ὅτι ὕστερον ἐπύθοντο οἱ Ἕλληνες τούτων τὰ οὐνόματα ἢ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν. ἀπ' οὗ δὲ ἐπύθοντο χρόνου, ἀπὸ τούτου γενεηλογέουσι αὐτῶν τὴν γένεσιν.

For if these gods too were known and grew old in Greece, like Heracles the son of Amphitryon, and especially Dionysus the son of Semele, and Pan the son of Penelope, one could say that these last two were men who had the names of those earlier gods. But as it happens, the Greeks say that as soon as Dionysus was born, Zeus sewed him up in his thigh and brought him to Nysa, which is in Ethiopia above Egypt, and concerning Pan they cannot say what happened to him after he was born. It is clear to me, therefore, that the Greeks learned the names of these later than the other gods. And it is from the time that they learned of them that they trace their genealogy.¹⁴⁴

Though the same solution cannot work in the cases of Pan and Dionysus as in the case of Heracles, the principle is similar. Herodotus finds a human historical point through which the Greeks relate chronologically to the

¹⁴⁴ Hdt. 2.146.1–2.

past: the point in time at which the Greeks discovered the names of these particular gods. The gods themselves, he argues, are much older than has been imagined by the Greeks, and the genealogical chronologies, such as those of Hecataeus, which relate contemporary generations to the gods are mythical representations of the founding of cults in the Greek world. As with the double Heracles, Herodotus creates a double past: one to which human chronology relates, and another which is the time of divine origins and exists far away in the distant reaches of time.¹⁴⁵

The effect is an extension of human time back to an earlier point, and the reevaluation of a mythical time of human–divine interactions in more human terms. This does not necessarily diminish the significance of the gods, but it does attempt to replace a mythical *Urzeit* on which customs and identity are built with a semi-historical, human past. By humanizing the legendary age of human–divine interactions, Herodotus also extends into the past the scope of his inquiry (ἱστορίη). Mythical tales of the Greeks are susceptible to analysis through an emerging method of gathering pieces of evidence and versions of events and considering them according to the principle of τὸ εἰκός. Greek myths (μῦθοι), for which Herodotus claims there can be no critical examination or refutation (ἔλεγχος), are transformed into semi-historical accounts of human actions in the past which can be assessed by standards applicable in the present. This metahistorical reevaluation of approaches to the past is carried out within Herodotus' long digression on the history and customs of Egypt, for it is apparent that his experience of the Late Period Egyptian representation of the past had given Herodotus a field in which to carry out a comparison not only of traditions about particular events and cultural practices, but of approaches and relations to the past.¹⁴⁶ In a sense, the Egyptian temporal perspective was a framework within which Herodotus could recalibrate the historicity of Greek collective memory. When Greek myths are retold in the manner of Herodotus, their significance is resituated in a human chronology, and the emphasis in human relations to the past is shifted from *illud tempus* to *hoc tempus*. The confrontation, therefore, of the Ionian historians with the statues of the Theban priests signifies an important intersection of Greek and Egyptian historicities, and a reorientation of Greek historical awareness. If Hecataeus' method consisted of comparing

¹⁴⁵ Heracles is also critical to the argument set forth by Vannicelli 2001 that although Herodotus uses the long Egyptian chronology to support his scheme of human history, the Heraclid periodization imposed on his account of Egypt's past is essentially Greek. On which, see Chapter 2.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Froidefond 1971: 152–53, who sees only “l'utilisation ‘logique’ de la chronologie” as the most significant feature of Herodotus' second book.

and writing down accounts of genealogical connections with a mythical age, Herodotus attempted to formulate a new historical consciousness, one that became critical to the existence of “history” as it came to be known. Jan Assmann, following Weber and Jasper, sets the terms for his discussion of Egyptian history as follows: “History belongs not to the people that has left behind a written record of its existence, but to the one that has become conscious of history as a meaningful dimension of its existence.”¹⁴⁷ When Herodotus used Egyptian historical consciousness in order to humanize the mythical past upon which Greek identity rested, he was ultimately laying the groundwork for his valorization of a nearer historical past, and a new focus for Panhellenic identity in the events of the Persian War. That groundwork had its origins in an encounter with some Egyptian priests at Thebes.

CONCLUSION

The idea that Herodotus used the long human past of the Egyptians in order to think out a Greek historical consciousness is not, of course, unfamiliar to us. Sally Humphreys observed that modern western society has a threefold inheritance from the ancient world: the monotheism of Judaism, the territorial imperialism of the Romans, and the intellectual imperialism of the Greeks, “who used other societies as material for thought.”¹⁴⁸ Historians of ancient Greece have analyzed the ways in which Herodotus contributed to a discourse on Greek identity by translating other cultures into categories comprehensible to his audience, and they have produced some important critiques of intellectual appropriation. There is, however, a cost in this form of analysis as it is conventionally practiced, since it historicizes texts according to the cultural workings of the Greek mind as the only producer of significant meaning, rendering “the other” a passive object of intellectual imperialism, without regard for the cultural self-representations of the supposed object. The intellectual imperialism of the Greeks, in which all the cultures surrounding Hellas are merely *bonnes à penser*, is thereby replicated on the level of scholarship. The alternative, as I have tried to show through this example, is to reconstruct (as well as one is able) the agency of those peoples who fall under the category

¹⁴⁷ “Geschichte hat nicht das Volk, das schriftliche Quellen seiner Existenz hinterlassen hat, sondern jenes, das sich der Geschichte als einer Sinndimension seines Daseins bewußt geworden ist.” Assmann 1991: 288, citing K. Jaspers, *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Munich, 1949). See also Hornung 1982. On this notion of history, see also White 1987: 1–25 and below Chapter 2.

¹⁴⁸ Humphreys 1983: 54.

of “other” in Herodotean and scholarly discourse. The manner in which Herodotus cites his sources all the way through the second book, especially the ubiquitous Egyptian priests, may well be part of a rhetoric intended to create authority for his narrative, but it also dramatizes his awareness of and dialogue with a specific and pressing Late Egyptian idea of human history. The researches of many scholars, most notably Alan Lloyd in his extensive commentary, have turned up sound confirmation, not of some absolute or empirical truth behind Herodotus’ statements in the Egyptian *logos*, but of plausible Egyptian cultural representations that Herodotus may have gathered from Egyptian priests. We must, therefore, modify the popular image of Herodotus the ethnographer, who does not discover, but rather creates through oppositional categories or “grids,” *barbaroi* useful to his overall project, in order to recognize the voices of the Egyptian priests, and other non-Greek “informants.” If we view the scene of Hecataeus and the Theban priests in this light, we can understand it as a truly dialectical moment in which Herodotus’ encounter with the historicity of another civilization resulted in one of the earliest discourses on the nature of history and of historical time in the Western tradition. This in turn raises questions about where modern narratives draw the boundaries of history and locate its origins, a subject to which I shall turn in the next chapter.

Luculentissima fragmenta *Manetho's Aegyptiaca and the limits of Hellenism*

Early in the seventeenth century, J. J. Scaliger published his *Thesaurus temporum*, a book which combined critical editions of major Christian world chronicles with a manual of universal chronology, the *Canones isagogici*. In this work, unlike his previous chronological study *De emendatione temporum*, he sought to integrate the long past of Egypt into his scheme for synchronizing the histories of different nations, a scheme based on the innovative creation of a 7,980-year Julian Period.¹ Scaliger derived his Egyptian chronology of kings and dynasties from the *Aegyptiaca*, a fragmentary history written in Greek by the Egyptian priest Manetho. This work satisfied his critical requirements far better than Herodotus' treatment of Egyptian history and chronology: "we find these dynasties more worthy of belief than Herodotus, a foreigner. For Manetho, an Egyptian by descent and dwelling, and a priest, dug them out of the ancient records of the Egyptian religion."²

Two centuries before the decipherment of any hieroglyphic texts, the *Aegyptiaca* possessed a unique authority because of Manetho's peculiar identity: an indigenous priest with direct access to Egyptian records, who nevertheless wrote in Greek. These *luculentissima fragmenta* (most brilliant fragments), as Scaliger called them, revealed to him "in an elegant order" (*pulchro ordine*) the long chronology of Egyptian records of the past.³ But as Anthony Grafton has shown, the fragments of the *Aegyptiaca* also cast light

¹ The *Thesaurus temporum* was published in 1606. On Scaliger's chronological work, see Grafton 1975 and 1993.

² Scaliger, *Thesaurus temporum, Isagogici canones* 310: "nos maiorem fidem his Dynastiis adhibemus, quam Herodoto homini peregrino, quum eas ex veteribus sacrorum Aegyptiorum scriniis Manethos genere et domo Aegyptius et sacerdos eruerit." Cf. the similar terms in which Josephus (*Contra Apionem*, §73) introduces Manetho. Scaliger had known of Manetho and Berossus in 1598, and published fragments of both, but it was not until he found Africanus' more reliable version of the epitome of Manetho in Syncellus (see below) that he attempted to integrate Egyptian chronology into his system.

³ Cf. Fruin 1847: xi who cites Vossius (*De Histor. Graec.*, p. 127. ed. Westermann): "luculenta quaedam fragmenta."

on the new context in which they were used, and especially the unresolved conflicts in Scaliger's approach to historical chronology. The problem with the *Aegyptiaca* was that the beginning of Manetho's dynastic list fell 1,336 years before the Mosaic account of creation (an impossible contradiction of the Bible's authority), and even exceeded the Julian period which Scaliger had created to embrace all chronologies. Yet owing to Manetho's authority as a legitimate original source, he felt compelled to integrate them all the same. He arrived at a partial solution to this problem, a prior Julian Period of "proleptic time," but this was not quite satisfactory to Scaliger himself or to his readers, and Scaliger never fully confronted the contradictions between Egyptian records of the past and his own chronological traditions.⁴

Scaliger's rediscovery of the *Aegyptiaca* is just one episode in the long and complex history of Manetho's work. It illustrates how these fragmentary remains have illuminated Egyptian historical writing and chronology, while also illuminating the way that Egyptian history has become embedded in other chronologies and narratives through various scholarly strategies of integrating and containing Egyptian history. In this regard, Manetho's *luculentissima fragmenta* are no less significant for historical and historiographical problems in more recent Classical scholarship on Hellenistic civilization. In this chapter, I address the position of the *Aegyptiaca* as a text that mediated between Egypt and the world of Hellenism (and ultimately the inheritors or claimants of Hellenism). I begin with Manetho's historical position, the state of the *Aegyptiaca* fragments, and the narratives in which they have been subsumed, before reconsidering the generative confrontation of traditions embodied in Manetho's history.

MANETHO IN CONTEXT(S)

Manetho⁵ is an emblematic figure often used to encapsulate the novel cultural conditions and intellectual possibilities created by the spread of

⁴ Grafton 1975: 173–76.

⁵ Manetho (written variously Μανεθώς, Μανέθων, Μανεθώ, Μανεθῶθ, Μανεθός; in Latin sources: *Manethon*, *Manethos*, *Manethonus*, *Manetos*) is clearly a Greek transcription of an Egyptian name, but no consensus has been reached on the original. Several suggestions propose a theophoric name: *Mbꜥ(t)-n-Dḥwty* – "Truth of Thoth" (Spiegelberg 1928, 1929); *Mbꜥ.n.i-Dḥwty* – "I have seen Thoth" (Griffiths 1970: 79); *Mri-ntr-ḥ* – "Beloved of the great god" (Redford 1986b: 118–21). Černý 1941 based his now widely circulated decipherment on a profession: *mniw-ḥtr* (Coptic ΜΑΝΕΩΤΟ) "Shepherd of Horses," "Groom," though this is not attested elsewhere as a name. Thissen 1987 modified Černý's suggestion to propose *Mniw-ḥw.t* "Shepherd (i.e. guardian) of the temple," appropriate for Manetho's position as a priest, but also unattested as a name. For overviews of these and other suggestions, see Griffiths 1970: 78–81 and Thissen 1987.

Hellenism in the wake of Alexander's conquests. As a native of Sebennytyos, the seat of the last dynasty of Egyptian pharaohs, and as a priest who served at Heliopolis, Manetho was steeped in the traditional knowledge of his ancient civilization, but he was also sufficiently adept in the language and culture of the new rulers of Egypt to translate his cultural patrimony into Greek. Manetho lived under the first two Ptolemies, and probably into the reign of the third, though the details of his life are as incomplete as the writings preserved under his name.⁶ The one event in his life that is reported in a literary source puts him in the role of an indigenous interpreter of Egyptian religion at the early Ptolemaic court, where he is said to have played a critical part in the formulation of the Graeco-Egyptian cult of Sarapis.⁷ Whether or not this story can be taken at face-value, Manetho was undoubtedly active at Alexandria. A tantalizing piece of documentary evidence supports the reasonable supposition that he would also have remained in contact with a wider network of indigenous priests in the rest of Egypt. A letter preserved in mummy cartonnage discovered at el-Hibeh discusses a complaint registered with the Greek *epistates* of the Herakleopolite nome about the theft of an official seal from the temple of Herishef in Phebichis.⁸ The complainant, the high-priest Petosiris, claims that a certain Chesmenis and his son Semtheus absconded with the seal, so that they could use it on any letters they wrote to Manetho or to anyone else. The way this Manetho is invoked suggests that he was an important figure in the government, perhaps an official who supervised the administration of the temples. The letter is dated 241/40 BCE (year 6 of the reign of Ptolemy III), which would be late in the life of the author of

⁶ No date of birth or death is known, but the introduction of the Sarapis cult (described below) with which Manetho is connected by Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 28 (*Mor.* 361f–362a = *FGrH* 609 T3) is placed in the reign of Ptolemy I Soter (satrap 323–305 BCE, king 305–282 BCE) in Plut. *loc. cit.* and *Mor.* 984a–b and Tac. *Hist.* 4.83–84. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.42–43 and Cyril *Adv. Iul.* (Migne, *PG* LXXVI.1, 521) put the event in the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282–246 BCE). A statue base inscribed with the name Manetho found in the excavation of the Sarapis temple in Carthage (*CIL* 8.1007 = *FGrH* 609 T5; date uncertain) is further evidence of the tradition that Manetho was connected with the cult. A reference to the Arsinoïte nome in Manetho's 12th Dynasty (Waddell fr. 34, 35, 36 = *FGrH* 609 F2, F3a, F3b) has often been considered a later interpolation, but if genuine, it makes 256 BCE, the year in which Philadelphus renamed the nome in honor of Arsinoe, a *terminus post quem* for the composition of the *Aegyptiaca*. If the evidence of P. Hib. 1 72 (discussed below) is accepted, this date is not at all improbable.

⁷ According to Plutarch, Manetho the Sebennyte, along with Timotheus, an *exegete* from the Eumolpid clan at Athens, and other advisors on both the Greek and Egyptian sides, came to an agreement that a statue brought to Alexandria from Sinope was Pluto and therefore none other than Sarapis. Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 28 (*Mor.* 361f–362a = *FGrH* 609 T3). The authenticity of this story, however, is not beyond doubt. See Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000, and the discussion below in Chapter 3, in the section entitled “Sarapis and Syncretism.”

⁸ *P.Hib.* 1 72 = *FGrH* 609 T4.

the *Aegyptiaca*, but well within the realm of possibility. If this is the same figure (and the name is not at all common), we can picture Manetho living in two worlds – that of Alexandria and also a wider world of Egyptian priests who were themselves in contact with Greeks, at least in their official business with the Greek administration.

Manetho's origins in Sebennytos may have helped him into his position of prominence at the Ptolemaic court. The first Ptolemies appear to have adopted a favorable position toward the Sebennyte 30th Dynasty, which had ruled from 380 until the Persians recaptured Egypt in 343/2 BCE. Some of the descendants of that dynasty celebrated their titles in monuments dating to the early Macedonian period, created either when Ptolemy governed Egypt for the heirs of Alexander or when he and his descendants consolidated their rule as kings in their own right. A fine basalt statue of the eldest son of Nectanebo II, the last indigenous king, suggests that the old royal family continued in (or resumed) their privileged social and economic position after the conquests of Alexander.⁹ Another member of the family, a man named Nectanebo, who was the great great nephew of Nectanebo I, founder of the 30th Dynasty, is known through the inscriptions on his sarcophagus to have held high military command, and to have acted as governor over three nomes in the eastern Delta.¹⁰ In the absence of precise dates for either of these individuals, it is impossible to say whether their offices and duties continued under Macedonian rule, but their monuments nevertheless attest the continued prestige of the Nectanebid house.

In fact, connections to the Sebennyte dynasty were actively cultivated under Alexander and the Ptolemies. Multiple variants of Alexander's pharaonic titulary included elements derived from the titles of Nectanebo II: one of his Horus names (*tkn-ḥꜥs.wt* "he who drives out foreigners") was borrowed from Nectanebo's Nebty-name, and another Horus name (*mk-Km.t* "protector of Egypt") alluded to the Horus name

⁹ Clère 1951; Chevereau 2001: 155–56, no. 229; Lloyd 2002: 119; Gorre 2009a: 378–80, no. 79. Though there is no precise date on the statue, this individual's genealogy puts him in the generation after Nectanebo II, and his inscription mentions a sojourn abroad suggesting that he left Egypt during the second Persian domination and then returned later. The statue, therefore, has been dated to the lifetime of Alexander or the early Ptolemaic period.

¹⁰ Sethe 1904: 24–26; Chevereau 2001: 156–57, no. 230; Gorre 2009a: 396–401, no. 79. His maternal great grandmother was the sister of Nectanebo I (for the genealogy, see Chevereau 2001: 157; de Meulenaere 1963). This figure is also discussed briefly by Turner 1984: 126. Cf. Lloyd 2002: 132 who is unwilling to date the sarcophagus more precisely than 30th Dynasty to Ptolemaic period. Chevereau 2001: 354 has suggested that this Nectanebo may have led Egyptian troops at Gaza in 312, though Gorre rejects this (Gorre 2009a: 399–400). Nectanebo's genealogy, however, puts him in the same generation as the son of Nectanebo II just discussed, and it is at least possible that he served in a military capacity early in the Ptolemaic period.

of Nectanebo (*mk-B3k.t* “protector of Egypt”). The titles of Ptolemy I also followed this pattern. His *prenomen* (or *ny-sw.t bity* name) appears in some cases as “The ka of Ra has come into existence, chosen of Amun” (*Hpr-k3-R^c stp-n-ʿImn*), the first part of which was the *prenomen* of Nectanebo I (*Hpr-k3-R^c*).¹¹ These continuities were even expressed in royal portraiture: the facial features of Egyptian-style sculptures of the early Ptolemies closely followed the idealized form of the last Egyptian pharaohs.¹² Given these official evocations of the Sebennyte dynasty, it is plausible to see the cult of Nectanebo II, which thrived under the early Ptolemies, as a parallel development to the Ptolemaic dynastic cult. Indeed, the sarcophagus of Nectanebo II was found at Alexandria in the Attarin Mosque (formerly the church of St. Athanasius) near a possible site of the ancient Sema, the dynastic burial place of Alexander and the Ptolemies.¹³ This evidence of close associations between the first Ptolemies and the last Egyptian pharaohs from Sebennytos puts Manetho’s position at the Ptolemaic court in a particular local and historical context: an apparent effort under the first Ptolemies to cultivate some measure of continuity with the Egyptian political traditions at Sebennytos that had existed prior to the second Persian occupation.

These connections between the Ptolemies and Sebennytos were part of a wider pattern of interactions and negotiations between Egypt’s indigenous

¹¹ The more usual *prenomen* of Ptolemy I was *stp-n-R^c mry-ʿImn* (see von Beckerath 1999: 234–35), but in two texts, he bears the *prenomen* *Hpr-k3-R^c*. The texts are: (a) an inscription from the speos of king Ay near Akhmim (*Urk.* II.12 = Sethe 1904: 1.27) and (b) an inscribed block discovered more recently in the Cairo Museum (JE 43610; see Kuhlmann 1998). The latter text has settled a long-standing debate over the former, which had been interpreted as evidence for the marriage of a Ptolemaic princess to a descendant of Nectanebo I (for the latter interpretation and discussion of previous theories, see Huss 1994a; Kuhlmann 1981; Tarn 1929). The new evidence proves K. R. Lepsius correct in his attribution of the name *Hpr-k3-R^c* to Ptolemy I. This attribution (though without the new evidence) was followed by Dillery 2003, who suggested that Manetho selected the name *Hpr-k3-R^c* for Ptolemy I in order to make connections with the Nectanebid dynasty.

¹² Stanwick 2002: 66–68.

¹³ See de Meulenaere 1960; Gorre 2009b. At Memphis, the cult continued at least until the reign of Ptolemy IV or V, and was resumed toward the end of the Ptolemaic period. Anemhor II (mentioned below), who held the high priesthood of Ptah at Memphis under Ptolemy II and III, was both priest of Nectanebo II and of the cults of Arsinoe II and of the royal couples (as noted by Quaegebeur 1989: 106–7). Other high priests of Memphis under the early Ptolemies also served the cult of Nectanebo II. This suggests that it may have received official support from the Ptolemies as part of the effort at cultivating links between the Ptolemies and the Nectanebids (Gorre 2009a: 615). The location of the sarcophagus of Nectanebo II (London, British Museum 10) at Alexandria is also an indication of connections with the Sebennyte dynasty, whether the tomb of Alexander and the Ptolemies was located near the Attarin Mosque or in the palace quarter further to the east. Owing to Nectanebo’s flight from Egypt, it is possible that he never occupied his sarcophagus, and that the body of Alexander himself may have spent some time therein (see Gorre 2009b: 66; Jenni 1986: 5–6; Fraser 1972: 1.14–17 and especially 2.39–40; Kienitz 1953: 220).

élites and the new ruling dynasty. Manetho is often seen as the exception to a general rule of separation between Greek and Egyptian culture in early Ptolemaic Egypt, and in terms of literary production he certainly was an exception. Nothing else survives from the early Ptolemaic period that is comparable to Manetho's work, fragmentary though it is. In social and political terms, however, Manetho was less unusual. He was part of an important, if not necessarily numerous, group of indigenous élites, who served in the Ptolemaic military or administration and were in regular communication with the new immigrant élite and even the court itself.¹⁴ Several of them are known through biographical texts carved in hieroglyphs on their statues and other monuments. Though these figures often held priestly offices, their activities were not restricted to the world of the temples. A Memphite notable represented by a statue from Vienna, for example, celebrated the fact that his counsel was praised by the Greek ruler of Egypt, probably Ptolemy I when he served as satrap, and that he was summoned by him to carry out important duties.¹⁵ Others, such as Djedhor-the-Lion, served as military officers.¹⁶ In the first years after Alexander took control of Egypt from the Persians, epigraphical evidence suggests that prominent Egyptians often took the lead at the local level in restoring any temples that had been damaged or neglected during the Persian occupation.¹⁷ Some became familiar with Greek literary and visual culture in the course of their careers, as is apparent in the inscriptions and decorations of the tomb of Petosiris of Hermopolis.¹⁸ Others referred directly to their connections with the Ptolemaic court as indications of their prestige.¹⁹ The biographical inscriptions of Djedhor of Tanis reveal a member of a prominent local family serving as a military officer and

¹⁴ On this point, see especially Legras 2002a (an earlier version of this view can be found in Welles 1970). Cf., however, Mooren 1978 and (more recently) Gorre 2009a: 482–88; the latter minimizes the Egyptian presence at court and dismisses evidence for that presence as exceptional (e.g. Manetho) and largely limited to roles circumscribed by competence in Egyptian fields of knowledge.

¹⁵ Vienna 20. See Derchain 2000: 16, 18–19, 41; Gorre 2009a: 216–19, no. 43.

¹⁶ Chevereau 2001: 177, no. 270; Gorre 2009a: 482–83, n. 22. To this individual can be added another Djedhor from Tanis (discussed below), and two others dateable to the third century BCE (Chevereau 2001: 187–89, nos. 286 and 288; Gorre 2009a: 224–26, no. 46). See also Lloyd 2002: 120–22.

¹⁷ E.g. the building undertaken by Hor at Dendera (Cauville 1989: esp. 46–49), or the work of Djedhor “the Savior” at Athribis (Sherman 1981).

¹⁸ Derchain 2000: 16–17, 32–33, 54–57. For the dating of Petosiris to the early Ptolemaic period and an examination of his biography, see Menu 1994, 1998. In his funerary inscriptions, Petosiris mentions the favor he received from the Macedonian king and his friendship with his courtiers (Text 81, line 87 = Lefebvre 1923–24: 1.144, 2.59). On the Greek visual elements in the tomb see Picard 1931.

¹⁹ In addition to the examples of Djedhor and Senu noted below, see also Smendes and his son Amasis, members of the Theban priesthood, who also celebrated their connections to Ptolemies II and III in their biographical inscriptions (Gorre 2009a: 70–77, nos. 17–18).

governor of his nome in the middle of the third century, and enjoying the particular favor of the king.²⁰ The inscriptions of Senu of Coptos document a career that took him from his Upper Egyptian home to Alexandria, where he was a close advisor to Ptolemy II Philadelphus and appears to have held a position (real or honorific) as overseer of the royal household (*mr-pr ip.t-ny-sw.t*) of Arsinoe II. He later returned to Coptos to serve as governor and played a critical role in the establishment of the cult of the Ptolemaic dynasty there.²¹

All these figures were active from the end of the fourth century BCE to just after the middle of the third, and so were roughly contemporary with Manetho. Together they formed an important early group of indigenous mediators between the Ptolemaic government and the political and cultural traditions of Egypt. By the end of Manetho's lifetime, the Ptolemaic dynasty and this group of indigenous élites had, through a series of strategic interactions and negotiations, created some of the most important formal practices and alliances through which they would maintain, develop, and renegotiate their political relationship over the coming centuries of Ptolemaic rule. In the reign of Ptolemy III (246–221 BCE), the dynastic cult of the Ptolemies was established in the Egyptian temples, though the impetus had begun already under Ptolemy II with the introduction of statues of the deceased Arsinoe II into Egyptian temples and a cult of the *Theoi Philadelphoi* (the “divine siblings”).²² Ptolemy II also created the special relationship between the Ptolemaic dynasty and the Memphite high priests

²⁰ Cairo CG 700. Daressy 1893; Montet 1938; Chevereau 2001: 166–67, no. 239; Gorre 2009a: 402–11, no. 80. For discussion and dating, see Lloyd 2002: 127–29, who follows the stylistic arguments of Bothmer et al. 1960: 128–30, 149, but also points out the large scale of the statue and the lack of pronounced Ptolemaic orthography in the hieroglyphic inscriptions as pointing to an earlier date. Gorre 2009a: 407–8 dates the statue to the period after the battle of Raphia (217 BCE) on the basis of Polyb. 5.107.1–3, but since other Egyptians are known to have served in military capacities before this date, the argument is not convincing.

²¹ The main documents are Cairo CG 700331; London BM EA 1668 but see also the other sources collected by Guernieur 2003b and 2006: 105–10. For further discussion see Derchain 2000: 16, 22–31, 44–53; Lloyd 2002: 123–27; Rowlandson 2007: 44; Gorre 2009a: 103–18, no. 27. There is some disagreement as to how to read the phonetic values of the hieroglyphic signs in this individual's name. Though Derchain 2000: 22 reads them as *Snw-šrī*, Lloyd 2002: 123 and n. 24 prefers *Snn-šps(w)*. I have followed the reading proposed by Guernieur 2003a: 336: *Snw.w*. The name has been interpreted (by Engsheden 2006 and Vitmann 2006: 587–90) as a hieroglyphic transcription of the Greek name Zenon (Ζήνων). Though phonetically possible, this interpretation raises several historical difficulties (see Guernieur 2006: 105, n. 2 and Gorre 2009a: 114–15). Gorre argues that Senu's role was restricted to his local responsibility for the cult of Arsinoe II, but this largely rests on an unconvincing reading of *mr ipt nsw* “the overseer of the household of the queen” as referring only to the sanctuary of the queen (i.e. Arsinoe) at Coptos (Gorre 2009a: 569–70, 607, 118).

²² Winter 1978; Quagebeur 1989; Lanciers 1991; Koenen 1993; see also Minas 2000: 68 n. 241, 183–84.

of Ptah. He initiated that lineage, which endured throughout the Ptolemaic period, by appointing Nesisty-Petobastis, a member of the Egyptian priestly class who also described himself as a courtier of the king.²³ In 243 BCE, in the reign of Ptolemy III, a synod of priests met at Alexandria in the precinct of Alexander's tomb, and passed the first surviving example of a series of sacerdotal decrees that would include the Canopus Decree and the famous Rosetta Stone.²⁴ Manetho may well have participated in this synod of 243, in which Egyptian priests, through the formal structure of a Hellenistic honorific decree, assumed the role of a Greek *polis*, while at the same time honoring a Macedonian king as an Egyptian pharaoh.²⁵ Whether or not he was there, Manetho's own individual activity as a mediator between cultures in this early period is evident in the fragmentary survivals from his literary production. He is credited with composing a *Sacred Book*, an *Epitome of Physical Doctrines*, and works *On Festivals*, *On Ancient Customs and Piety*, and *On the Making of Kyphi*, as well as *Criticisms of Herodotus*.²⁶ The separate identity of this last work, however, is disputed and may in fact refer to Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, a history of Egypt in the Greek language, written for the first time by an Egyptian who could use native sources, but also engaged with prior representations of Egypt in

²³ See Gorre 2009a: 285–96, no. 59. Thompson 1990: 108 notes the wide-ranging authority of Anemhor (the successor to Nesisty-Petobastis) as “a clear sign of royal concern both to exercise some measure of control in the temples, and to work with and through this prominent priestly family.” In general, see also Quaegebeur 1980; Thompson 1988: 138–46; Gorre 2009a: 605–22.

²⁴ This new text, discovered at Akhmim, is to be published by Yahya el-Masri, Hartwig Altenmueller, and Heinz-Josef Thissen.

²⁵ On this view, see especially Clarysse 2000, and also my further thoughts in Moyer (forthcoming a). There has been a long-standing discussion over the gradual “Egyptianization” of the sacerdotal decrees that begins from the observation that the Canopus decree (until recently the earliest surviving example) was the “most Greek” of the decrees (see Taeger 1957; Thissen 1966: 80–82; Onasch 1976; Hölbl 2001: 164–66). Clarysse 2000 raises some important criticisms, and this view will surely have to be revised further in light of the new text of 243 BCE. For a recent commentary on the Canopus Decree, see Pfeiffer 2004. For an overview of the surviving evidence of the decrees, see Huss 1991, to which must be added the new version of the Canopus Decree found at Tell Basta (Tietze, Lange, and Hallof 2005) and of course the new decree found at Akhmim.

²⁶ *Sacred Book*: Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 2 pro. 5 (FGrH 609 T9; Waddell fr. 76); *Epitome of Physical Doctrines*: Diog. Laert. 1.10 (FGrH 609 F17; Waddell fr. 88); *On Festivals*: Lydus *Mens.* 4.87 (FGrH 609 F15; Waddell fr. 84); *On Ancient Customs and Piety*: Porph. *Abst.* 2.55 (FGrH 609 F14; Waddell fr. 85); *On the Making of Kyphi*: Suda s.v. κύφι (FGrH 609 F16a); *Criticisms of Herodotus*: Eust. *Il.* 11.480, *Etym. Magn.* s.v. Λεοντοκόμος (FGrH 609 F13; Waddell fr. 88). The separate identities of some of these works are disputable, and Manetho's authoritative persona also attracted some spurious works. E.g., Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 2 pro. 5 (FGrH 609 T9; Waddell fr. 76) seems to refer to Manetho's historical as well as religious works under the title of the *Sacred Book*. The *Criticisms of Herodotus* may actually be part of his historical writing, or another work. In discussing the *Aegyptiaca*, Josephus (*Ap.* 1.14 § 73 = FGrH T7a) writes that Manetho “convicts Herodotus of having erred through ignorance.” See also Waddell (1940): xiv–xv. Pseudo-Manetho: the *Book of Sothis* (FGrH 609 T11a–b, F25–28), and the *Apotelesmatika* (FGrH 609 T2, T12a–b).

Greek historiography and ethnography.²⁷ This was a potential watershed in the interaction between Greek civilization and Egyptian, and in Greek and Egyptian intellectual history.

The epitomized and fragmentary preservation of the *Aegyptiaca*, however, has made the problem of understanding Manetho's position especially difficult, since the contexts in which his work survives are entangled with other cross-cultural perceptions and reactions. The remains of the *Aegyptiaca* fall into two groups: (1) the epitomes and fragments of epitomes preserved principally in Christian chronographical works of the third and fourth centuries CE; and (2) the more extensive quotations in the treatise *Contra Apionem* written in the first century CE by the Jewish historian Josephus.²⁸ There are two epitomized versions of Manetho's original work: one preserved in the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, and one in the *Chronographiae* of Sextus Julius Africanus. Eusebius' version of the epitome is the more complete, inasmuch as it includes the reigns of the gods, demi-gods, and spirits of the dead before it enumerates the dynasties of mortal kings.²⁹ Africanus' epitome preserves only the list of human kings from the first king Menes onward, though what his version does include appears less subject to abbreviation and distortion.³⁰ This judgment was made already by the monk George Syncellus, who preserved the Greek texts of both these epitomes by carrying out a comparison of the two in the course of his *Ecloga Chronographica*, a work he wrote ca. 800 CE, in order to show that the incarnation occurred in 5500 (*anno mundi*).³¹ In addition to Jerome's Latin version of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, an Armenian translation also exists, which is very similar to the text preserved in Syncellus, though in some cases it appears to represent a better tradition than that on which

²⁷ Joseph. *Ap.* 1.14 §73 (*FGrH* 609 F1).

²⁸ The definitive treatment of the fragments of the *Aegyptiaca* remains Laqueur 1928. Also important is E. Meyer (1904, 1907), whom Jacoby *FGrHist* follows. On Jacoby's approach to the Josephus fragments especially, note the criticism of Schäfer 1997a. For brief summaries of these arguments, see also Waddell 1940: xv–xx; Fraser 1972: 1.506–7 and n. 105. In what follows below, I have generally followed Laqueur.

²⁹ Variants of this “pre-dynastic” sequence are also preserved in heavily corrupted or manipulated traditions thought to be based on Manetho, including the *Excerpta Latina Barbari*, and the so-called *Sothis Book*.

³⁰ Laqueur (1928): 1086. On occasion, Eusebius' epitome includes something missing from Africanus: e.g., the entry in Eusebius' version of the 12th Dynasty king Sesostrius includes the height of this king, not reported in Africanus' version (Waddell, frs. 34–35 = *FGrH* 609 F2, F3b, pp. 30–31, ll. 9–10). Africanus, however, often preserves names in the dynastic lists where Eusebius only gives a number of kings and years, stating that nothing important happened in those reigns (e.g., in Eusebius' version of the 2nd Dynasty, he skips the names of three kings preserved in Africanus: Waddell frs. 8–9 = *FGrH* 609 F2, F3b, pp. 20–21, ll. 5–10).

³¹ Syncellus p. 65 ll. 18–19; p. 69, l. 21 (ed. Mosshammer 1984). On Syncellus see Adler and Tuffin 2002.

Syncellus principally relied.³² Aside from a greater degree of abbreviation in the dynastic lists of the tradition represented by Eusebius, some confusion has been introduced into the 15th to 17th dynasties of this epitome, which were at some point rearranged to accommodate a synchronism between the biblical patriarch Joseph and Manetho's Hyksos or "Shepherd Kings."³³ Some such connections to Jewish or Greek traditions that appear in the epitomes may be later interpolations. One certain case of interpolation is a comment on Amenophis, the seventh or eighth king of the 18th Dynasty, who is reputed to be Memnon and "a speaking statue." The singing colossus of Memnon (actually Amenhotep III) on the Theban West Bank was a popular tourist attraction in the early Roman period, but there is no evidence for its miraculous performances before the later first century BCE, so this particular comment must have been introduced later in the transmission of the text.³⁴ Common to both Eusebius and Africanus is another apparent departure from the structure of Manetho's original work: the expansion of the *Aegyptiaca* to include a 31st Dynasty of Persian kings (the second Persian occupation), reigning after the last king of the 30th Dynasty, Nectanebo II.³⁵ Testimonia in Syncellus and in Jerome's Latin version of Eusebius' *Chronicon* show that Manetho ended his history with Nectanebo's defeat by the Persian king Artaxerxes III Ochus, and the flight of Egypt's last native pharaoh.³⁶ Keeping these distortions in mind, and

³² Laqueur 1928: 1082 notes several points at which variant readings given by Syncellus correspond to the text of the Armenian translation. He proposes that Syncellus had at his disposal more than one version of Eusebius, and based his text on a more corrupt version, but included variants from a better tradition related to that of the Armenian translation.

³³ The Hyksos, as the version of Africanus and the more extensive quotations of Josephus show, originally formed the 15th Dynasty, but in the Eusebius epitome they are moved to the 17th Dynasty and so closer to the 18th Dynasty synchronism with Moses.

³⁴ The earliest literary reference to the "singing" colossus of Memnon is Strabo's account of his visit to Thebes with the prefect Aelius Gallus in 26/5 BCE. The oldest Greek or Latin graffito inscribed on the colossus dates to the period 21–11 BCE (see Sijpesteijn 1990 and for the inscriptions in general, see Bernand and Bernand 1960).

³⁵ Laqueur 1928: 1084; Lloyd 1988b: esp. 157–58.

³⁶ Jer. *Chron.* Olympiad 108.3 (= *FGrH* 609 T8c): *Ochus Aegyptum tenuit Nectanebo in Aethiopiam pulso, in quo Aegyptiorum regnum destructum est. huc usque Manethos.* The closing words at the end of the 30th Dynasty have fallen out of the Armenian version of Eusebius and the end of the *Aegyptiaca* is placed after the 31st Dynasty (Waddell fr. 75 (c) = *FGrH* 609 F3a), but elsewhere in the Armenian version (*FGrH* 609 T8d) is the following: "This is from the writings of the author just mentioned, Josephus, from the beginning to the end, in order, Egyptian antiquity and chronicles up to their king Nektanebos, whom I have already listed above next to the others. And, after Nektanebos, the Persian king Okhos acquired Egypt and ruled six years. After him, Arses, son of Okhos, ruled four years. After him, Darius ruled six years . . ." etc. (translation from Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996: 123–24). The reference to Josephus is a mistake, and Manetho is clearly meant. Eusebius here signals a break at the end of Nectanebo, and then adds the Persian rulers. Syncellus is therefore contradictory, and confuses things further at another point (p. 307, 21

leaving aside variations in names and figures, the epitomes give a reasonable indication of the structure of the *Aegyptiaca*: a succession of kings, divided into three books and thirty dynasties. For each of these kings a reign length is given, and in some cases the entry includes a brief comment on the king, significant events of the reign, or synchronisms with Greek or Jewish tradition.³⁷ After each dynasty in the epitomes, a total number of regnal years is given, and Syncellus keeps a running total of each version at various points.³⁸

The fragments quoted by Josephus provide firmer footing for reconstructing the lengthier passages which lay behind some of the brief notices in the epitomes. Josephus' citations of Manetho come in the context of a polemical treatise concerning the antiquity of the Jews written against another Egyptian, Apion the grammarian, who had gained Alexandrian citizenship, and represented the Greeks before the emperor Gaius in 40 CE when they brought charges against the Alexandrian Jews. The latter were defended by Philo of Alexandria. Apion's attack on the rights of Alexandrian Jews, his disparagement of Jewish religious customs, and his handling of the Exodus (which he put in the first year of the seventh Olympiad, i.e., at the very late date of 752 BCE) were Josephus' primary target, but he also set out to refute other anti-Jewish polemics, in which category he included parts of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*. Josephus quotes passages from Manetho that make Jerusalem a city founded by the Hyksos after their invasion of Egypt and eventual expulsion. He also cites the brief story of Harmaïs' revolt against his brother the pharaoh Sethos, and these two are later identified as the legendary Greek figures Danaus and Aegyptus. Most notorious among the Josephus fragments is a narrative which equates

(Mosshammer) = *FGrH* 609 T8e), when he writes: "As far as Okhos and Nektanebos, Manetho records the thirty-one dynasties of Egypt, 1,050 years of his third volume. Later matters are from writers of Greek history; fifteen Macedonian kings" (trans. Verbrugge and Wickersham 1996: 152–53). The "31" dynasties has been corrected by Meyer (from λα to λ), but the confusion is telling. The actual end of Manetho's work was the last native dynasty, the 30th. See also *FGrH* 609 T1e = Syncellus, p. 58, ll. 1–2 (Mosshammer) and *FGrH* 609 F12 = Moses of Chorene *Historia Armeniae* 2.12. For further arguments, see also the discussion of Lloyd 1988b, noted above. The division of the *Aegyptiaca* into thirty dynasties is also consonant with the conventions of Egyptian wisdom literature, as exemplified by the *Instruction of Amenemope*. See below, p. 139.

³⁷ Africanus' epitome, e.g., includes comments on thirty of the 127 kings listed by name. Eusebius, with only a few exceptions, preserves the same comments. Some of the synchronisms may be later interpolations. See above, p. 93.

³⁸ At first, Syncellus gives a grand total after every dynasty, but then he switches to summations at the end of each book of the *Aegyptiaca*. The Armenian version of Eusebius does not have running totals, suggesting that these are the work of Syncellus. On the other hand, running totals were part of the king-list tradition as represented by the Turin Canon (see Redford 1986a: 10–14), so they could very well have been part of the original structure of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*.

Moses with a certain Osarseph, the leader of a group of lepers and other polluted persons who are expelled from Egypt, and form an alliance with the descendants of the Hyksos against the pharaoh Amenophis.³⁹ Though Josephus in some cases purports to quote Manetho verbatim, in others he clearly paraphrases and summarizes. Sifting out the true fragments of the *Aegyptiaca* thus poses a difficult problem, and scholars have suspected that several statements attributed to Manetho are later interpolations. In particular, the connections between the Hyksos, the impure exiles, and the Jews have been trimmed by some commentators and collectors of fragments as additions to the text made in the context of later Jewish-Egyptian controversies. Others, however, have disputed the grounds for these exclusions.⁴⁰

The particular fragments that have survived from Manetho's text, and the chronographical and polemical contexts in which they occur, have had a considerable impact on the role of the *Aegyptiaca* in modern scholarship. The chronological use to which Eusebius and Africanus put the epitomes was continued by Scaliger, and thus shaped a Renaissance and Enlightenment debate, the terms of which changed only with the decipherment of hieroglyphic writing and the advent of unmediated access to Egyptian documents.⁴¹ Even with the advantages provided by these new texts and the wealth of archaeological evidence that has accumulated, Manetho remains an important, if problematic, chronological source for

³⁹ Joseph. *Ap.* 1 §§75–82, 84–90, 94–102a, 232–51. These are detailed at much greater length below. There are problems in identifying the discrete, genuine passages of Manetho in Josephus, and reference to particular sections is made cumbersome by the multiple collections of fragments, each of which divides the text in slightly different ways. Jacoby's *FGrH* is in some respects standard (though note Schäfer 1997a, discussed below). Waddell's Loeb volume (1940), is also frequently cited. Most recently Verbrugge and Wickersham 1996 have followed Jacoby *FGrH* for their text, but have rearranged the numbering and division of the fragments. Nevertheless, their concordances (204–12) are useful. In citing the Josephus fragments, I shall for convenience simply cite the section numbers of the *Contra Apionem*.

⁴⁰ This is a central problem discussed in the fundamental work of Laqueur 1928: 1064–80, who reconstructs a complex history of transmission for the Manetho fragments in Josephus. In addition to verbatim extracts from the genuine Manetho (Joseph. *Ap.* §§75–82, 94–102a, 237–49), and indirect citations (§§ 84–90, 232–36, 251), Laqueur believed that Josephus used a rationalistic critique of Manetho written by a “Hellenist” (§§ 254–61, 267–69, 271–74, 276–77), and that later Jewish–Egyptian polemic had resulted in additions to the text both favorable to Jews (§§ 83, 91) and unfavorable (§ 250). Though Jacoby *FGrH* 609, p. 84 criticized Laqueur's reconstruction, and followed the earlier work of Meyer (1904, 1907), there are only minor differences in what each considers genuine. Summaries of the various arguments regarding the authenticity of the Josephus fragments may be found in Waddell 1940: xvii–xviii; Fraser 1972: 1.506–7 and n. 105; and Schäfer 1997a: 187–88. Laqueur 1928: 1079–80 also gives a summary of his own conclusions. Most recently, Schäfer 1997a has pointed out that the source criticism that excludes the anti-Jewish material is based on disputable *a priori* assumptions about the improbability of anti-Jewish sentiment among Egyptians of the early third century BCE, and that anti-Jewish polemic is therefore not necessarily to be excluded from the genuine fragments of Manetho. See further below.

⁴¹ On this debate and the “decline” of historical chronology after Scaliger, see Grafton 1975.

modern Egyptologists.⁴² Eusebius and Africanus, for their part, were in some respects continuing earlier controversies over the relative antiquity of Egypt and other nations, controversies which are evident in Josephus and in the Manetho fragments he cites. Since Josephus primarily quotes passages in which Manetho appears to relate a hostile version of Jewish history, the *Aegyptiaca* has been an important source for scholars, especially historians of religion, investigating early perceptions and representations of Jews in the ancient world. In this line of research, some have placed Manetho (along with Hecataeus of Abdera) at the origins of a Graeco-Egyptian tradition of anti-Jewish polemic.⁴³ Whether or not Manetho is understood as one of the first anti-Semites of antiquity, both the Josephus fragments and the epitomes show that the *Aegyptiaca* was implicated in a triangular set of perceptions and reactions between Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews in the Hellenistic world. As a result, Manetho has considerable importance for a more general understanding of the intellectual encounters between civilizations in Hellenistic ethnographical and historiographical literature.⁴⁴

The way scholars imagine these intellectual and literary confrontations, however, has been shaped not only by the textual contexts of the *Aegyptiaca* fragments, but by the historical and historiographical contexts in which Manetho's work has been placed. Manetho's work is frequently understood as a product of the influence of Greek historiography on a native Egyptian. Gregory Sterling, for example, has defined the *Aegyptiaca* as one of the first examples of apologetic historiography, a Hellenistic "host genre," which culminates in the work of Josephus and in the New Testament narratives of Luke and Acts.⁴⁵ This genre, Sterling argues, was derived from Greek ethnography, and was a medium through which non-Greeks offered corrective or defensive self-definitions and positioned themselves in relation to the wider Hellenistic world.⁴⁶ In harmony with his notion

⁴² Though Egyptologists have found Manetho's chronology inaccurate in absolute terms, more recent work has recognized that whatever errors he made, Manetho was drawing on written Egyptian records of the past. V. V. Strouve gave a more favourable evaluation of Manetho's historiography than his contemporaries. On Strouve, see Korostovtsev 1977. For a more recent discussion of Manetho and his sources, see Redford 1986a: 203–337. The most obvious aspect of Manetho's importance to Egyptian chronology is the continued use of his dynastic scheme in modern Egyptology.

⁴³ See especially Yoyotte 1963, Stern 1974: 62–86, Aziza 1987: 46–55, Denis 1987, Schäfer 1997a, 1997b: 15–21. Gruen 1998: 41–72, however, suggests that the story was actually a Jewish invention.

⁴⁴ See Borgeaud 2004: 97–102. Note, however, Manetho's virtual absence from Momigliano 1975a.

⁴⁵ Sterling 1992: 2–19, 118–36.

⁴⁶ Sterling 1992: 17 gives this basic definition: "Apologetic historiography is the story of a subgroup of people in an extended prose narrative written by a member of the group who follows the group's own traditions, but Hellenizes them in an effort to establish the identity of the group within the setting of the larger world."

of the genre, and with the contexts in which Manetho was later preserved, Sterling stresses Manetho's presentation of Egypt's chronological priority as typical of the interethnic rivalry within Hellenism that characterizes apologetic historiography.⁴⁷ Other recent scholarship has also stressed the dependence of Manetho on Greek antecedents. John Dillery, for example, acknowledges the Egyptian material behind the *Aegyptiaca*, and Manetho's complex, mediating position at court, but nevertheless argues that the Egyptian priest, under the influence of Greek historiography, has "historicized" traditional Egyptian literary genres to produce "the first Egyptian narrative history."⁴⁸ Likewise, influential works by Oswyn Murray and Peter Fraser assumed that Manetho modeled his history on the accounts of Egypt written by Herodotus and by Hecataeus of Abdera, an older contemporary of Manetho also active at the Ptolemaic court, who composed his own *Aegyptiaca*.⁴⁹

These arguments for literary dependence show that scholars often implicitly set Manetho's novel historiographical enterprise into a civilizing narrative. Whatever the Egyptian content, the *Aegyptiaca* appeared because Greek *paideia* was instilled in a native, and Greek thought, in the form of historiographical conventions, has been imagined as reshaping Egyptian culture. The narrative of "influence" or "dependence" is even more explicit in scholarship of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Walter Otto, in his comprehensive study of priests in Hellenistic Egypt, wrote that

⁴⁷ Sterling 1992: 133–35.

⁴⁸ Dillery 1999: 93: "it was only with the coming of Greek speakers in considerable numbers that a lengthy narrative history of Egypt was composed by an Egyptian. The most important, if not sole reason for this was the influence of two histories of Egypt composed by Greeks that he must have known well: Herodotus' treatment of Egypt . . . and Hecataeus of Abdera's own *Aegyptiaca*." The idea that Manetho wrote an "extended prose narrative" is also important to Sterling's characterization of Manetho's historiography (1992: 124). Both authors rely primarily on the Josephus fragments to argue for this impression of the character of the work, rather than the indications of form given by the epitomes. Dillery does refer to the king-list aspect of the *Aegyptiaca* (1999: 93, 95, 104 n. 37, 109, 112–13), but in his view its primary function is to provide a chronological frame for the narratives and (he argues) the combination of king-list and narrative is derived from the Greek works of Herodotus and Hecataeus. I shall argue below that Egyptian historiographical principles are behind Manetho's combination of king-list and narrative. For Dillery's views on Manetho's political position, see below, n. 59.

⁴⁹ This Hecataeus is not to be confused with the Milesian discussed in the previous chapter. Murray 1972: 209 erroneously asserts that Manetho borrowed the structure of his history from Hecataeus of Abdera. Fraser 1972: 506–9 asserts Manetho's use of Herodotus and Hecataeus as models with little or no argument. A simplistic version of this argument is found in Armayor 1985. There have been a few scholars who have dissented from this position, notably Laqueur 1928: 1089, 1091, though he does not provide an argument. The Egyptologist Donald Redford (1986a: 225–26) considers it "most unlikely" that Manetho would use earlier Greek writers on Egypt, and criticizes Murray 1972. Mendels 1990: 93–94 also briefly argues that Manetho is largely independent of Herodotus and Hecataeus of Abdera.

"One must of course not consider this attempt [sc. Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*] as an achievement that Egypt produced out of itself without any external impetus, but rather one must see in it an indication and at the same time a result of the influence of Greek civilization (*Bildung*) on an Egyptian priest."⁵⁰ Ernest Havet gave a negative variant of this assessment when he suggested that the *Aegyptiaca* must have been written later in the Ptolemaic period by a Greek or at least by a thoroughly Hellenized Egyptian, since Manetho could not have absorbed Hellenism so completely at such an early date.⁵¹ In either case, Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* appears because Greek history and Greek civilization have arrived in Egypt. The broader story that Manetho's work exemplified was encapsulated by Arnaldo Momigliano: "All the nations that came into contact with the Greeks in the Hellenistic age (and even before) produced books in Greek about their national history. They did so partly because the Greeks taught them to see themselves in a different way through the medium of Hellenic historia, partly because they wanted to make themselves respectable before Greek eyes."

This civilizing narrative of Hellenism, whether implied or declared, is a legacy of J. G. Droysen's *Geschichte des Hellenismus*, and of the imbrication of colonial ideologies and early scholarship on the Hellenistic kingdoms. It was Droysen, of course, who introduced the term *Hellenismus* to designate the civilization of the Greek-speaking world after the conquests of

⁵⁰ Otto 1905–8: 2.229 gives this opinion in evaluating Manetho's history: "Auf den Namen eines kritischen Geschichtswerkes hat Manethos ägyptische Geschichte jedenfalls auch nicht den geringsten Anspruch, eher auf den eines historischen Romans. Die Bedeutung des manethonischen Werkes liegt demnach nicht in dem von ihm Geleisteten, sondern darin, daß in ihm zum ersten Mal ein Ägypter den Versuch gemacht hat eine zusammenhängende Darstellung der gesamten Geschichte seiner Heimat zu bieten. Man darf freilich diesen Versuch nicht als eine Leistung fassen, die das Ägyptertum aus sich heraus ohne äußeren Anstoß hervorgebracht hat, sondern muß in ihm ein Anzeichen und zugleich eine Folge des Einflusses griechischer Bildung auf einen ägyptischen Priester sehen." Cf. Momigliano 1990: 24, quoted below.

⁵¹ Havet 1873: 32 argued the pseudonymity of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* (and Berossus' *Babyloniaca*) thus: "La première opinion que j'exprimerai est que les pages que nous lisons sous les noms de Manéthon et de Bérosee ont été écrites, sinon par des Grecs, du moins par les Orientaux qui avaient eu le temps de se pénétrer de l'esprit grec. C'est une pensée déjà indiquée au début de ce travail. Si les Grecs eux-mêmes, d'un esprit si vif et si philosophique, n'avaient pas pourtant, à l'égard des peuples avec qui ils se trouvaient en rapport, toute la curiosité que nous voudrions qu'ils eussent eue, je ne puis croire que les Barbares de l'immobile Orient aient été si empressés à se faire connaître aux Grecs, à parler leur langue, à écrire des livres grecs, et à étaler pour eux, dans ces livres, le mystère de leurs traditions sacrées." Cf. the similar argument for pseudonymity proposed by Cl. Hengstenberg, *Die Bücher Mose's und Aegypten, nebst einer Beilage: Manetho und die Hycsos* (Berlin, 1841), cited and opposed by Fruin 1847: xii, who nevertheless considers Manetho a product of the influence of Greek historiography (Fruin 1847: xxviii–xxix): "Quae omnia [sc. Egyptian sources] adire nemo nisi Aegyptius sacerdos poterat; disponere autem recte et diiudicare, atque perpetuam ex iis historiam componere Graecus solus valebat, aut qui Graecorum historica arte esset imbutus."

Alexander.⁵² His work was intended not merely as a political history of a certain patch of antiquity, but rather as the history of a critical phase in the development from naturally determined, particularistic, pagan nations toward a universal Christian world civilization. In his approach, Droysen revealed how much he had absorbed of the philosophy of world history formulated by G. W. F. Hegel, whose lectures he had attended at Berlin University.⁵³ Droysen's *Hellenismus*, a concept which embraced a new monarchic state formation, a universal Greek *Bildung*, and religious syncretism, was the synthesis that overcame and superceded oppositions between East and West. The relationship of these terms is clear. Greek *Bildung*, accompanied by Macedonian arms, dominated each particular Oriental *Kultur*. These cultures were not destroyed by the coming of Alexander, but rather taken over, brought into harmony with Hellenism, and subsumed under the interests of the new states.⁵⁴ Some early scholars, including Auguste Bouché-Leclercq, who translated the *Geschichte des Hellenismus* into French, were uncomfortable with the excesses of Droysen's Hegelian idealism.⁵⁵ But with these tendencies muted, the narrative of Hellenism and its political, cultural, and religious consequences persisted, and in a more sober form it was easily compared with the contemporary civilizing mission of European colonialism in Egypt, India, and elsewhere.⁵⁶ The story of Manetho's assimilation to Greek historiographical conventions, then, is ultimately based on a set of "common-sense" assumptions about the relationship between Greek culture and Egyptian in the Ptolemaic kingdom – assumptions that subsume Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* in a universalizing history of the colonization of historical consciousness.

In the wake of decolonization, the analogy between modern colonialisms and the Hellenistic kingdoms continues, but political, social, and economic histories of the Hellenistic world have taken a much more self-conscious and critical approach, and have tried to avoid earlier tendencies

⁵² See the introductory chapter of this book.

⁵³ A brief but important sketch of Droysen's historiography and influences is given by Momigliano 1970, reprinted in Momigliano 1977: 307–23 and 1994: 147–61. On the influence of Hegel on Droysen, see also Bravo 1968.

⁵⁴ Droysen 1877–78: 3.16: "eine unendliche Mannigfaltigkeit von Rechten, Verfassungen, Bildungen, Culten wird subsumirt unter dem neuen Interesse des Staates" Droysen 1877–78: 3.27: "aber das Vorherrschende ist, daß die Bildung des Griechenthums nicht zu rohen Barbaren, sondern zu Völkern von alter, eigenthümlicher Cultur kommt, diese nicht vernichtet, sondern staunend sie auffaßt und mit sich in Einklang zu bringen sucht."

⁵⁵ See Bouché-Leclercq's introduction (Droysen 1883–85: viii–xxxvi).

⁵⁶ Droysen 1877–78: 3.27–28 himself does not compare Hellenism with contemporary colonialism in any detail, and he insists on the uniqueness of the former and its difference from the colonization of America or India. This analogy, however, was certainly a part of later histories of the Hellenistic period. For Ptolemaic Egypt, see the discussion in the introduction to this book.

to assume the perspective of the Hellenistic “colonizers.” In the case of Ptolemaic Egypt, scholars such as Édouard Will, Jean Bingen, and Barbara Anagnostou-Canas have followed contemporary anthropological and sociological studies of colonialism, and explored the negative, oppressive aspects of “colonial rule” in Egypt. Roger Bagnall, however, in a stimulating article entitled “Decolonizing Ptolemaic Egypt,” has pointed to the hermeneutic risks involved in mapping Ptolemaic Egypt onto models derived from modern colonialism, and has urged a more judicious comparative use not only of post-colonial theory but also literature, especially when it comes to imagining indigenous responses to Graeco-Macedonian domination. Bagnall’s brief example draws on episodes in the novels of Pramoedya Ananta Toer, set in Dutch colonial Java, in order to suggest the varied range of possible Egyptian experiences of and responses to changes in the regime of agricultural production brought about by the Ptolemies – experiences and responses only hinted at in the documentary papyri left behind by the administration.⁵⁷

A similarly cautious approach may illuminate Manetho’s intellectual production. The appropriation of indigenous knowledge, its reorganization and use in the construction of the colonial state, both by European powers and by the coopted local élite, are well known from the modern experience,⁵⁸ but is it helpful to place Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca* in an analogous position with regard to the Ptolemaic kingdom?⁵⁹ Assimilating Manetho’s

⁵⁷ Bagnall 1997.

⁵⁸ E.g., the “epistemic violence” involved in the formation of Sanskrit studies, and the codification of Hindu law during the British colonial rule of India, as described by Spivak 1988: 280–82 and Cohn 1996: 16–74, as well as the examples from colonial South Sumatra and Guha’s critique of South Asian historiography discussed below, pp. 101–2.

⁵⁹ Scholarly positions on this are varied, but many have painted Manetho as a native who “collaborated” with the Ptolemaic government. Though S. K. Eddy generally viewed the attitude of the Egyptians to the Greeks as antagonistic, he wrote of Manetho’s literary efforts that they “apparently had the purpose of explaining the history and customs of Egypt to his Makedonian masters in a language they could understand, so that in a way he collaborated with them” (Eddy 1961: 295; see also 319). Kuhrt 1987: 33, 56 connects Manetho with Berossos as figures who shared an identity of interests with their new rulers, and “helped to make accessible the local ideological repertoires and historical precedents for adaptation by the Macedonian dynasties.” Mendels 1990 argues that Manetho was relatively independent of Greek sources, and a “nationalist,” but one aligned with the political and imperial interests of the Ptolemaic court. Huss 1994b: 128–29 examines Manetho’s work as a form of *Zusammenarbeit* with the Ptolemaic dynasty. John Dillery takes a more nuanced approach to Manetho’s political position as neither opposition nor collaboration, though his description of Manetho’s significance suggests more the latter. Just as in the Persian period, the Egyptian priesthood was, in Dillery’s opinion, “looking for ways to maintain its own status, and [they] secured it through granting legitimacy to the new rulers of their land” (1999: 111). As examples of Manetho’s use of the “convergence of ideas” to confer legitimacy on the Ptolemies, Dillery (1999: 111–12) suggests that he composed Ptolemy Soter’s titulary (see also Dillery 2003), and that a reference to coregency in

work to the broad model of knowledge–power relations that has developed out of the post-colonial critique risks obscuring a range of other possibilities. To return to colonial Indonesia, and an example drawn from my late father’s research, consider the manuscripts and printed editions of Malay-language legal codes from South Sumatra, which were produced first under the British administration and then under the Dutch. In some cases, the colonial authorities used the process of assembling indigenous legal codes not simply to document local customary law, but as a means of implementing legal “reforms.” As a result, the indigenous content and form of the codes were distorted.⁶⁰ Critical examples of this are the law codes (*Oendang Oendang Simboer Tjahaja*) assembled by colonial administrators in the 1850s and 1860s for the residencies of Palembang and Bengkulu. In regulating forms of marriage (especially *jujur* marriage, which involved a bride-price), the codes suppressed certain aspects of customary usage and in the process reorganized indigenous categories of legal thought. These official texts became very influential, and served as models for subsequent productions, written both by colonial authorities and by indigenous scholars working within the administration. One of the latter was Mohammed Sah, who served as the regent of Soengai Lemau dan Benkoelen. In preparing a text on customary laws in Bengkulu concerning relations between youths and maidens (*Adat Boedjang Gadis*), he followed the corresponding section in the code prepared by the colonial administration in the neighbouring residency of Palembang, and as a result suppressed any mention of *jujur* marriage.⁶¹ The same Mohammed Sah, however, also wrote (at the request of colonial authorities) a scholarly synthesis of marriage forms (including *jujur*) from an indigenous perspective, without any sign of the distortions typical of colonial productions.⁶² This work is part of a group of similar Malay legal manuscripts from Bengkulu notable not only for a lack of colonial interference, but also for their comprehensibility:

Indeed, one has the impression that many of the legal codes were written by the local elite for the Dutch (or English). They are digests of local customs and legal ideas but are explicit enough to be readily understood by the outsider. This is in marked contrast to the truly indigenous legal statements that are often difficult

the 12th Dynasty may have served as a legitimating precedent for Ptolemy Soter and Philadelphus. The first suggestion is intriguing, if speculative. The second suggestion is not supported by the evidence of Manetho’s text. Sesostri is referred to as the son of Ammenemes, but there is no mention of coregency. Both these ideas suggest that Manetho’s knowledge was used to legitimate the Ptolemaic dynasty in a strategic exchange of mutual support between the Ptolemies and the indigenous élite.

⁶⁰ Moyer 1975: 10. ⁶¹ Moyer 1975: 12–13.

⁶² This text is discussed at length in Moyer 1975: 106–58.

to read and understand. Thus, somewhat aphoristically, one might say there are three types of legal codes in South Sumatra: 1) those written by the local people for themselves; 2) those written by the local people for outsiders; and 3) those written by the colonial authorities for the local people.⁶³

Mohammed Sah, however, is both “local” and “colonial authority,” and this scholar at the boundaries of the colonial project demonstrates that different indigenous intellectual responses may coexist even in the same individual. Assumptions about the nature of Manetho’s historiography must be reexamined in this light.

A series of lectures by Ranajit Guha at the Italian Academy have addressed the specific problem of the colonized past and indigenous intellectual production, and his examination of colonial and post-colonial historiography in India poses questions that have a particular resonance for interpreting Manetho’s position in relation to Hellenism. Guha conducts his critique primarily against Hegel’s idea of world-history, and he does so through the figure of Ramram Basu, a pandit at Fort William College, who in 1801 at the request of an official of the college wrote the first “modern” history in Bangla, his native language. Ramram Basu’s achievement is all the more remarkable since Hegel, almost thirty years later, would declare that India, despite its vast wealth of literary culture, was a land without history – no state, no development of the *Geist*, and therefore no history, according to the Hegelian dictum.⁶⁴ Within the development of the colonial state, however, this scholar from Srirampur was able to write “proper” history. Ramram Basu gives Guha a reference point through which to explore Hegel’s terms of exclusion, the intimate relationship between Hegelian world-history and modern colonialism, and also the Indian narratologies and ideas of historicity that lie beyond the limit of world-history. Manetho presents a similar opportunity. In reexamining assumptions about Manetho’s dependence on Greek historiography, we address the persistent narrative of the civilizing effects of *Hellenismus*, and concomitantly Manetho’s relationship to the Hellenistic state, in this case, the Ptolemaic court. Manetho allows us to explore the limits of Hellenism, both as a phenomenon in history, and as a concept that has thoroughly insinuated itself in modern historiography.

In what follows, I shall reexamine Manetho’s position at the boundaries of Hellenism by exploring specific Egyptian historiographical motivations

⁶³ Moyer 1975: 13; Appendix II provides an example of the compressed, allusive mode of expression employed in the first category of documents (Moyer 1975: 280–82).

⁶⁴ Guha 2002: 10.

and strategies in the *Aegyptiaca*, examining not only the Egyptian content of the work, but its formal structure. As the epitomes show, Manetho shaped his history as an Egyptian king-list, and in this choice, I shall argue, he adopted an historiographical strategy that was independent of his Greek predecessors, in terms of both the structural principle itself and its chronological function in historiography. Since the narrative fragments have been held up as evidence that Manetho wrote an extended narrative history of Egypt on the basis of Greek models, I shall next consider the relationship of these fragments to both Greek antecedents and Egyptian narrative patterns. Finally, I shall turn to Manetho's union of king-list and narrative. The Egyptian king-list traditionally played a role in representing the ideology of pharaonic kingship, and the evidence of both the epitomes and the fragments shows that Manetho's expansion of the king-list with inserted comments and narratives created an exegesis of kingship ideology, best located not in a stemma of Greek historians, but in the discursive space created between and by the indigenous élite and the Ptolemaic court.

STRUCTURE AND CHRONOLOGY

There is little question that Manetho was familiar with prior Greek representations of Egyptian history and culture. At the very least, he knew Herodotus. Manetho, as I mentioned earlier, is reported to have written *Criticisms of Herodotus*, and the epitomes of the *Aegyptiaca*, moreover, suggest that he corrected the Greek historian's mistakes in the course of his own history.⁶⁵ Some scholars have suggested that these criticisms were meant to conceal the influence of Herodotus, and that Manetho used the latter and perhaps Hecataeus of Abdera as a model for the overall structure of the *Aegyptiaca*, but this is an argument that denies Manetho the capacity to "write back" to Greek historiography. Any responses and counter-arguments are subordinated to "Greek influence," obscuring Manetho's counter-discursive position relative to Greek historiography, a position (as I shall argue) that was developed out of Egyptian ways of representing

⁶⁵ On the *Criticisms of Herodotus*, see above n. 26. The first king of Manetho's 1st Dynasty in Eusebius' epitome (Waddell frs. 7(a), 7(b) = *FGrH* 609 F3a, F3b): "Menes of This . . . whom Herodotus called Men (Μῆνω)." This is actually somewhat inaccurate. Herodotus 2.99.2 calls the first Egyptian king Min (Μίνω). The second king of Dynasty 4 in the epitomes of both Africanus and Eusebius (Waddell frs. 14, 15, 16 = *FGrHist* 609 F2, F3a, F3b): "Suphis . . . he raised the largest pyramid, which Herodotus says was made by Cheops."

the past.⁶⁶ Though the remains of Manetho's "pre-dynastic" section are somewhat garbled, it is fairly clear that he began his history with dynasties of gods, demigods, spirits of the dead and heroes and then proceeded to enumerate his thirty dynasties of human kings.⁶⁷ Hecataeus of Abdera (as far as one can tell from the fragments preserved in Diodorus Siculus⁶⁸) also followed a progression of gods, divine kings, and human kings, but there is no reason to suppose that Manetho was following a Greek precedent.⁶⁹ The pattern is clearly derived from the indigenous Egyptian tradition of the king-list, exemplified above all by the Turin Canon. This text, preserved on a 19th Dynasty papyrus (ca. 1200 BCE), begins with divinities belonging to the Greater Ennead and the Lesser Ennead, then lists the divine spirits (*ḥ.w*), the Followers of Horus (*šms.w Hr*), and a group of mythical pre-dynastic kings, before recording human kings from Menes onward divided into groups which prefigure Manetho's dynastic principle.⁷⁰ Herodotus, as I argued in the previous chapter, had at least indirect access to this tradition. In his account of Egypt, he claims that Egyptian priests read to him from a list of 330 kings beginning with the first king Min (2.100.1). In outlining the history of Egypt he gives an abbreviated account of the accomplishments of significant kings from Sesostris to Psammetichus, derived (as he says) primarily from Egyptian sources. Hecataeus of Abdera probably also had indirect access to such lists,⁷¹ and whether in the form of the Turin Canon or of monumental inscribed versions such as the lists of Sety I and Rameses II at Abydos, this tradition was ultimately the common source for both the Greek version of the Egyptian king-list and Manetho's.

⁶⁶ The idea that Manetho's criticism conceals influence may be found in Murray 1972: 205, 209–10 and is adopted by Dillery 1999: 102. On "counter-discourses" and "writing back" to canonical texts of a colonizing power, see Tiffin 1987 and Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989.

⁶⁷ Differing accounts of Manetho's pre-dynastic sequence are given in the Armenian version of Eusebius, Syncellus, the *Excerpta Latina Barbari*, Joannes Lydus *De mensibus*, and Malalas *Chronographia* (Waddell frs. 1, 3, 4, 5 = *FGrHist* 609 F3a, F27, F4, F5a).

⁶⁸ The extent to which Diodorus drew on Hecataeus of Abdera is subject to debate. In the section on Hecataeus in *FGrHist*, Jacoby printed almost all of Diodorus' first book. Burton 1972: 1–34 believes that although Hecataeus was Diodorus' primary source, he also used several others; cf. Burstein 1992: 45 n. 1, who considers Hecataeus the single source.

⁶⁹ Murray 1972: 205, 209: "Manetho does not seem to have written a complete Hecataean ethnography, but merely to have covered the same ground as his historical section, and (both in his history, and more especially in other works) to have discussed the theology of Egyptian religion. Within these limits it is still clear that Manetho followed the Hecataean structure, the threefold division of the early kings of Egypt into gods (identified with physical elements), divine kings, and human kings; and he accepted the rationalistic physical explanation of the Egyptian gods provided by Hecataeus." See also Murray 1970: 167–68; Fraser 1972: 1,506. Redford 1986a: 225–26 criticizes this idea.

⁷⁰ Redford 1986a: 336–37. Ryholt 1997: 31–33.

⁷¹ Diod. Sic. 1.44 mentions the king-list tradition, and presumably Hecataeus (Diodorus' primary source on Egypt) was aware of this as well.

That Manetho followed native tradition in writing his *Aegyptiaca* as a king-list is evident and uncontroversial, but did he follow earlier models in adapting this tradition to the demands of Greek historiography? On first impression and at the broadest level of form, no. In Herodotus and Hecataeus, the sequence of kings and their deeds is framed by geographical and ethnographical sections: accounts of the anomalous flooding of the Nile, the way the river has formed the land, and the peculiar customs of its inhabitants. After a brief excursus on the antiquity of Egypt and its cultural priority (2.2.1–2.5.1), Herodotus describes its physical features (2.5.2–2.34), and Egyptian customs (2.35–2.98), before introducing Min, the first king of Egypt, and the idea of the king-list (2.99ff.). From the fragments in Diodorus Siculus, it appears that the structure of Hecataeus of Abdera's *Aegyptiaca* was a variant of Herodotus' pattern. Hecataeus began with sections on Egyptian theology and geography, before giving his version of an Egyptian king-list, which he followed with an account of *nomoi*: first those pertaining to the king, and then other customs.⁷² In Herodotus and Hecataeus, the idea of the king-list as a way of representing the past becomes part of a wider Greek pattern of describing an *ethnos* and its place in the world in the present. Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, on the other hand, is a king-list from beginning to end.⁷³

The very fact that Manetho combined a king-list structure with narratives has been interpreted as a sign of the influence of Herodotus and Hecataeus, since both of these authors previously presented a sequence of narratives about Egyptian kings, and referred to the Egyptian king-list tradition.⁷⁴ From the Egyptian perspective, this combination of genres is indeed innovative,⁷⁵ but describing Manetho's work as an imitation

⁷² On Hecataeus' portrait of kingship and his dependence on Herodotus for his historical portrait, see Murray 1970.

⁷³ Though Sterling 1992: 132 puts Manetho in a genre of apologetic historiography dependent on Greek ethnography, this move proves problematic, and he must admit that "it is difficult – if not impossible – to consider Manetho's work an ethnography. While he clearly stands in the tradition of Herodotus and Hekataios, he swerves so far from the former in form that we are clearly dealing with a second generation offspring." Cf. Murray 1972: 209, quoted above in n. 69. It is also worth contrasting Manetho's approach to that of Berossos, whose *Babyloniaca* is often seen as a parallel project in Hellenistic historiography written by a native. Unlike the *Aegyptiaca*, Berossos' first book does include a geographical description, a creation account, and other myths and legends before turning to the historical section. This part of the *Babyloniaca*, especially the geographical section, does not have a Mesopotamian precedent (for discussion, see Kuhrt 1987: 47–48), suggesting that Berossos, at least in his first book, may have taken an approach that was closer to his Greek predecessors than was Manetho's.

⁷⁴ Dillery 1999: 109, 112–13; 2007: 226.

⁷⁵ Redford 1986a: 230 suggested that the Turin Canon may have included at least one inserted comment on the basis of the placement of fragment 40 proposed by Wildung 1977: 30–32. This placement and the reading of the fragment have, however, been rejected by Ryholt 2000: 88–91.

of Greek models glosses over the manner in which the Egyptian priest responded to his Greek predecessors with an almost inverse structural emphasis, by inserting narratives and other comments, but preserving a far more prominent king-list structure. Herodotus, as I shall discuss more fully below, emphasized continuous narrative at the expense of the king-list by linking together an abbreviated chain of royal anecdotes from Sesostris down to the reign of Amasis, and suppressing most of the royal names to which no stories were attached. Manetho, on the other hand, retained all the names and reigns available to him and inserted narratives using what could be described as an exegetical format: a pattern of lemmata and comments. In one of the few surviving verbatim quotations of the *Aegyptiaca*, Josephus says that Manetho begins his account of the Hyksos invasion as follows: “†Toutimaios†: Under this king, I do not know in what manner, a god raged against us . . .”⁷⁶ In the original text, the name of the king appeared as a lemma or rubric, followed by a narrative of significant events, facts about the king, or synchronisms with Greek tradition.⁷⁷ Longer narratives and comments may have been placed after the list of the kings of a particular dynasty, as in the Harmaïs-Sethos story and the tale of Amenophis. In Josephus' version of Manetho's 18th Dynasty, Harmaïs, Sethos, and Amenophis appear to be doubles of earlier figures in the dynasty, and Josephus criticizes Manetho for not including the length

⁷⁶ †ΤΟΥΤΙΜΑΙΟΣ† ἐπὶ τούτου οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως θεὸς ἀντέπνευσεν (*FGrH* 609 F8). The verb ἀντέπνευσεν literally means “blew against” (for discussion, see below). The name of the king is corrupt, but what remains of the name and the phrase ἐπὶ τούτου indicates that there was a king's name immediately preceding the story. The manuscript reads τοῦ τίμαιοιο ὀνομα, and this phrase goes back at least to the time of Eusebius (263–339 CE), who quotes Josephus, and it also appears as *honorabile nomen* in the Latin translation of Josephus by Cassiodorus (ca. 490–583 CE). The emendation ΤΟΥΤΙΜΑΙΟΣ was originally proposed by Alfred von Gutschmid, on the basis of similarity with Dedumose (*ddw-ms*), the name of two kings of the late 13th Dynasty. This does not, however, fit the chronology of the Third Intermediate Period and the Hyksos invasion (see Ryholt 1997: 301–32), and his existence has been rejected. The name in the text of Manetho has also been rejected as spurious by Adam Bülow-Jacobsen (in Ryholt 1997: 327–39). The latter's hypothetical reconstruction, however, is unsatisfying since it does away with all traces of a royal name. There was undoubtedly a close antecedent to the demonstrative τούτου, and the inserted gloss ὀνομα shows that it was recognized as a name by some early copyist. Though it may be desirable to banish the name Toutimaios from Third Intermediate Period history, the existence of a royal name cannot be so easily dismissed from the text of Manetho, especially given the further evidence of the lemma-and-comment format discussed below. There is nothing, moreover, preventing the corrupted passage from concealing the name of whatever king Manetho thought to be the last ruler of the 13th or 14th Dynasty.

⁷⁷ For this characterization of the structure of Manetho's history, see Redford 1986a: 229–30, Lloyd 1975–88: 110–11 and (more briefly) Drews 1973: 208. Some of the insertions into the king-list structure, such as the synchronisms and some of the factual statements, were not narratives at all. Manetho noted, for example, that Sesochris of Dynasty 2 was five cubits and three palms tall. Pharaohs of Dynasty 5 succeeded to the throne at age six and ruled until he was 100. Of Osorcho in Dynasty 23, it is noted that “the Egyptians called him Heracles.”

of Amenophis' reign as he does with the other kings. The omission of the reign length, and Josephus' apparent inclusion of duplicate rulers at the end of the dynasty, can be explained by understanding Amenophis' name as a rubric or lemma at the head of a narrative that referred the reader back to a name in the preceding dynastic list. In this way, Manetho delayed the narratives in order to avoid interrupting the list of kings until he reached a convenient stopping point at the end of the dynasty.⁷⁸ Josephus later misunderstood the names and stories at the end of the 18th Dynasty as belonging to separate kings in Manetho's list. The narratives quoted in the *Contra Apionem* do provide evidence of a significant novelty relative to prior Egyptian patterns of representing the past. But relative to Greek historiographical sensibilities, Manetho's formal approach would have had the effect of foregrounding the Egyptian king-list tradition by retaining the integrity of his dynastic divisions and including long lists of names and regnal years even when no stories were attached to them.

If not the form then perhaps the function of the king-list in Greek historiography had a determining influence on Manetho. In Herodotus' *Histories*, the Egyptian king-list serves a particular metahistorical purpose.⁷⁹ As I argued in the previous chapter, archaizing Late Period Egyptian traditions regarding the past, in particular lengthy priestly genealogies purporting to be coextensive with Egypt's long chronology of kings, provided Herodotus with a particular awareness of a human historical past from which he could critique Greek mythological and genealogical traditions. Pietro Vannicelli, moreover, has argued along similar lines that the Egyptian king-list played

⁷⁸ For discussion of these narratives and their placement, see Redford 1986a: 229–30, 248–51, 255–56 and Helck 1956: 40–42. The Amenophis story was originally connected to Hor who is to be identified with the historical Amenophis III. Hor is noted by Josephus in the Amenophis story as an ancestor who also wished to see the gods. In the epitome of Eusebius, the Exodus is connected with the king immediately following Hor in the 18th Dynasty, and so is in roughly the right chronological position. Eusebius' version of the epitome also appears to have included a brief reference to the Harmaïs narrative in its dynastic list. Neither story is mentioned in Africanus' version of the epitome.

⁷⁹ I leave Hecataeus aside for the moment, because of the following problems. Hecataeus appears to have borrowed a great deal from Herodotus, but through the screen of Diodorus' murky methods of synthesis it is difficult to make a detailed argument about whether Hecataeus followed Herodotus' use of the Egyptian king-list. Even though he criticizes Herodotus and seems aware of other sources, Hecataeus (to judge by Diodorus) follows his predecessor's sequence of kings fairly closely (see the convenient summary table in von Beckerath 1997: 34). There are some additions and changes to the list and to its structure, but Diodorus does not provide enough information to discern whether these are due to Hecataeus or another source. There are few synchronisms between Egyptian kings and Greek figures in the text of Diodorus, so it is difficult to tell whether he follows a universalizing scheme such as that of Herodotus, described below. On Hecataeus' dependence on Herodotus for his historical section, see Murray 1970: 152. Burstein 1992, however, notes that although Hecataeus generally followed Herodotus' scheme, he did introduce some revisions and improvements.

an important role in Herodotus' efforts at developing a universal history.⁸⁰ By synchronizing this long, documented history of human kings with Greek chronological traditions, Herodotus was able to open up a *spatium historicum* extending into the remote Greek past, within which he could conduct his inquiries.⁸¹ The paradox of this approach is that although Herodotus criticizes Greek traditions on the basis of Egyptian records, he divides the Egyptian past into periods that are a product of Greek chronology. The crucial nexus of Herodotus' project of universal chronology and his historicization of the Greek past is an implied synchronism between the Egyptian king Sesostris, and Heracles, a hero of great importance for Greek genealogy. Herodotus places both about 900 years before his own day,⁸² and this synchronism shapes the way he represents the Egyptian king-list. Herodotus gives names and accomplishments of only three rulers among the 330 that precede Sesostris, stating that all the rest did nothing of significance.⁸³ Beginning with Sesostris, however, Herodotus' Egyptian history is a continuous sequence of kings, each with his own story, so that this period forms an almost continuous narrative.

The epitomes of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* do include the pharaoh Sesostris in the 12th Dynasty, and even mention briefly the legend of his extensive conquests recorded in Herodotus (2.102–110).⁸⁴ Africanus and Eusebius, however, give no evidence that Manetho made a synchronism between Sesostris and Heracles. Such a link, in any case, could not have been reconciled with Herodotus' 900-year chronology, since Manetho put either twenty-five or twenty-eight centuries between Sesostris and the end of the Saïte dynasty.⁸⁵ The only evidence that Manetho made any connection with Heracles comes in the entry for the 23rd Dynasty king Osorcho (Ὅσορχω) or Osorthon (Ὅσορθών). According to the epitomes, the Egyptians called

⁸⁰ Vannicelli 2001.

⁸¹ On the development of the *spatium historicum* by Herodotus (and Hecataeus), see von Leyden 1949–50 and the previous chapter.

⁸² This leads to a chronological inconsistency, since 900 years is far too much time for the sixteen kings that Herodotus lists from Sesostris forward, given Herodotus' usual practice of reckoning three generations per century. On this synchronism, and its relationship to Herodotus' overall chronology, see also Lloyd 1975–88: 1.171–94.

⁸³ These are Min (the first of the 330), Moeris (the last), and queen Nitocris, who falls somewhere between these two: Hdt. 2.99–101.

⁸⁴ Manetho Dynasty 12, third ruler (Waddell frs. 34, 35, 36 = *FGrH* 609 F2, F3a, F3b). Laqueur 1928: 1065 (following Sethe and Meyer) considered this a later interpolation, but given the evidence of Demotic versions of the Sesostris legend, both Herodotus' version and Manetho's may well be based on Egyptian sources. See Widmer 2002: 387–93.

⁸⁵ According to Africanus' generally more accurate epitome, the total number of years is 2,830. Eusebius' epitome (in Syncellus) has 2,472 years.

this king Heracles. The comment probably refers to an Egyptian epithet of the king,⁸⁶ rather than a synchronism, since it would place Heracles around two and a half centuries before the end of the Saïte dynasty, a chronology that would have emphasized to an extreme degree the proverbial youth of the Greeks.⁸⁷ It is suggestive, however, that from Osorcho/Osorthon to the end of the Saïte dynasty, counting inclusively, there are either fifteen or sixteen kings (depending on the epitome) – about the same number as in the narrative of Egyptian history that Herodotus constructed to fit the Heraclid period.⁸⁸ Manetho's mention of Heracles may allude to Herodotus' scheme, but if so he contradicts the Greek chronology, and perhaps offers the epithet Heracles as an Egyptian explanation for Herodotus' error.⁸⁹

In avoiding Herodotus' Heraclid scheme, Manetho also corrected the chronological distortions that resulted from its imposition on the Egyptian past. The most egregious error was Herodotus' displacement of the Old Kingdom pyramid builders Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus so that they occur four generations after Sesostris and less than 800 years before his own day.⁹⁰ According to the epitomes, Manetho explicitly corrected Herodotus,

⁸⁶ Redford 1986a: 312 suggests that Osorcho's successor in Manetho's list, Psammous (= *P3-s3-Mw.t* – the son of Mut, i.e., Khonsu who was equated with the Greek hero Heracles), was originally a comment on the historical Osorkon III that became a spurious royal name. Doubt is cast on this interpretation by von Beckerath 1994, who suggests that the reference may be to Osorkon IV.

⁸⁷ According to both the regnal years and a synchronism between the previous king Petubates and the first Olympiad that appears in Eusebius' version. On this synchronism, see below.

⁸⁸ Sixteen kings in Africanus: Osorcho, Psammus, Zet, Bocchoris, Sabacon, Sebichos, Tarcus, Stephinates, Nechepsos, Nechao, Psammetichus, Nechao, Psammuthis, Uaphris, Amosis, Psammecherites. Fifteen kings in Eusebius: Osorthon, Psammus, Bocchoris, Sabacon, Sebichos, Taracus, Ammeris, Stephinathis, Nechepsos, Nechao, Psammetichus, Nechao, Psammuthis, Uaphris, Amosis. One difference is the mysterious Zet (Ζήτ), who only appears in Africanus, on whom see Redford 1986a: 311.

⁸⁹ To judge by the epitomes, Manetho also made no mention of the Greek tradition that a mythical Egyptian king, Busiris, attempted to sacrifice Heracles. This legend, which is well attested in the sixth–fourth centuries BCE in Greek vase paintings (see *LMC* III.i s.v. Bousiris; overview in Livingstone 2001: 87–90), was already criticized by Herodotus (2.45). Busiris does not correspond to any king in Manetho's list, since the name is probably derived from a place (*Pr-Wsir* – see Griffiths 1970: 369), rather than a person, and Manetho saw no need to incorporate an imaginary king in order to accommodate Greek tradition. On Busiris in Greek literature, see Livingstone 2001: 1–90, esp. 73–90 and Vasunia 2001: 183–215.

⁹⁰ Lloyd 1975–88: 1.188–89 follows the explanation for Herodotus' error given by Erbse 1955: 109–17, namely that Herodotus was misled by the Egyptian priests' statement (2.101.1) that between Min and Moeris, no ruler except the queen Nitocris accomplished anything of importance, and so had to place the pyramid builders after Moeris, but before the Saïte dynasty, for which period he had access to more detailed Greek information. Perhaps a misunderstanding of a king-list sparsely commented upon did lead Herodotus to this conclusion, but another factor must be his efforts to construct out of the elements available to him a continuous narrative from Sesostris forward.

restored the pyramid builders to much more accurate positions in his dynastic sequence, and revised the Greek transliterations of their names.⁹¹ This differs sharply from Hecataeus of Abdera, who appears to have followed Herodotus' treatment of the pyramid-builders in most respects. He placed Chemmis (Cheops), Chabryes (Chephren), and Mencherinus (Mycerinus) in approximately the same position in his account of Egyptian history, and reports similar stories about them.⁹² Another Herodotean error that Manetho corrected regards the builder of the labyrinth, a monumental structure in the Fayyum. Herodotus describes it as an achievement of twelve joint rulers of Egypt (the dodecarchs), whereas Manetho correctly identified the structure as part of the mortuary complex of Amenemhet III (under the name Lamares) in the 12th Dynasty.⁹³ In brief, Manetho generally returns the kings and royal deeds, out of which Herodotus formed his narrative of the Heraclid period, to appropriate positions in the traditional structure of the king-list.⁹⁴

Though Manetho did not shape his *Aegyptiaca* according to Herodotus' Sesostriis–Heracles synchronism, the epitomes do include other connections with Greek tradition. Given the evident interest in chronological information on the part of both the epitomators and the authors who have transmitted the epitomes, it is possible that some of these are later interpolations, but it is often difficult to exclude a particular comment without recourse to *a priori* assumptions about Manetho's motivations. The inconsistencies between the epitomes further exacerbate the problem of separating “genuine Manetho” from later accretions. Nevertheless, I shall briefly consider the character of these synchronisms, and their relationship both to the structure of the *Aegyptiaca*, and to prior Greek historiography, on the provisional assumption that they can give insight into the structure and chronology of Manetho's historiography.

⁹¹ Dynasty 4, second ruler (Africanus' epitome, Waddell fr. 14 = *FGrH* 609 F2): β' Σοῦφις, ἔτη ξγ'. δς τὴν μεγίστην ἡγεῖρε πυραμίδα ἣν φησὶν Ἡρόδοτος ὑπὸ Χέοπος γεγενῆσθαι. Also in Eusebius (Waddell frs. 15, 16 = *FGrH* 609 F3a, F3b).

⁹² Diod. Sic. 1.63–64. At 1.63.5 Diodorus (ca. 60–56 BCE) puts the pyramids 1,000 years in the past, but also shows that he was aware of an alternative dating that put them 3,400 years in the past. Cf. 1.44.1 where he quotes Egyptian priests as reckoning the span of human rule over Egypt down to the reign of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos at 5,000 years.

⁹³ Hdt. 2.148. On the derivation of the name Lamares, and the Egyptian memory of this king, see Widmer 2002.

⁹⁴ An exception that proves the rule is the queen Nitocris, who falls in the vast indeterminate period between Min and Moeris, but has a brief narrative. Her position in this period, however, is not specified in any way, or connected with Greek chronology. She is merely cited as a unique example of a woman ruling Egypt. The identity of this figure may derive from a corrupted name in the king-list tradition represented by the Turin Canon. See Ryholt 2000.

In chronological order, then, the first synchronism puts Deucalion and the Greek flood story in the reign of Manetho's 18th Dynasty king Misphragmuthosis.⁹⁵ As the father (or in some traditions, the brother) of Hellen, Deucalion stands at the very beginning of Greek ethnical genealogy, and so also at the beginnings of Greek chronology.⁹⁶ In Herodotus, he is never given a secure date, and does not figure precisely in the universal chronology of the *Histories*.⁹⁷ He exists somewhere in the remote past before Heracles and before Cadmus.⁹⁸ Between these two figures and Deucalion there is the unresolved chronological problem of the "hourglass effect." Typical of oral genealogical traditions and even written works dependent on such traditions, the hourglass effect is the tendency to emphasize both distant origins and the more recent remembered past, while leaving a thinner chronological sequence in the middle.⁹⁹ Herodotus' efforts to fit Greek traditions into the long chronology of Egypt were an attempt to work out some of these problems, but the long, relatively undifferentiated period from Min to Moeris indicates the limitations of Greek tradition.¹⁰⁰ Somewhere in that undifferentiated period falls Deucalion. Manetho, however, according to the testimony of Africanus, puts Deucalion on a fixed point in the continuous chronology of the Egyptian king-list,¹⁰¹ a move that reveals a gap in Herodotus' chronology just as it bridges it, implicitly subordinating the structure of Greek history to that of Egyptian. A similar case is the equation of the Egyptian king Sethos and his rebellious brother Harmaïs

⁹⁵ The reference occurs in Africanus (Waddell fr. 52 = *FGrH* 609 F2), but not in Eusebius or Josephus, who cites this part of the *Aegyptiaca* extensively.

⁹⁶ On Greek ethnical genealogy, see Hall 1997: 34–66.

⁹⁷ Deucalion does not have any fixed place in Hecataeus' chronology either, judging by Diodorus Siculus' account of Egypt. He is mentioned only once in a passage on the generation of living creatures from Egypt's soil after the flood (1.10.4).

⁹⁸ In describing the Dorian wanderings at 1.56.3, Herodotus places the reign of Deucalion sometime before the coming of the Cadmeians. At 2.145, Dionysus son of Semele (daughter of Cadmus) is 1,600 years before Herodotus' day.

⁹⁹ On this phenomenon in Herodotus, see Thomas 2001: "It is important to point out that this phenomenon does not suddenly cease when literacy arrives or even when historiography begins. Though the development of historiography and the study of chronology may have affected recognition of the phenomenon, what matters is what people bother to write down. If a historian records (even with embellishments) the traditions that are available, those traditions are still at the mercy of whatever processes of oblivion have occurred." On oral traditions more generally, see Vansina 1985.

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 1 above, Thomas 2001: 207–10 and Vannicelli 2001.

¹⁰¹ In terms of the total regnal years of Africanus' epitome there are 1,053 years between the end of Misphragmuthosis' reign and the end of the Saïte dynasty. According to Herodotus' chronology, Deucalion must be more than 1,600 years in the past. If this is Manetho's synchronism, he has reduced the scale of Greek chronology considerably.

with Aegyptus and Danaus of Greek legend. This synchronism occurs in the epitome of Eusebius and also in Josephus' account of Manetho's 18th Dynasty, though not in Africanus.¹⁰² Danaus and his daughters are important in Herodotus' account of Egypt as agents for the transfer of religious practices to the Greeks from the older civilization of the Egyptians, but like Deucalion, they are not integrated into a continuous chronology, and float in a period of distant origins.¹⁰³ If Josephus and Eusebius accurately represent the text of Manetho, Greek traditions are given a "rationalized" chronology only by being integrated into the framework of Egyptian history.

The other two possible synchronisms in Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* fall in the more well-worn tracks of Greek chronology. In both epitomes, Troy is said to have fallen in the reign of Thuoris, the last king of the 19th Dynasty, who is equated with Homer's Polybus, the husband of Alcandra. When Telemachus visits Menelaus and Helen in the *Odyssey* (4.125–32), they possess luxurious furnishings given to them when they were guests of Polybus and Alcandra in Egyptian Thebes. Since the date of the Trojan War was a fundamental point in the past from which Greeks reckoned genealogical chronologies, Herodotus devotes considerable attention to reconciling Homeric tradition with his understanding of Egyptian chronology. He makes a generic distinction between the material that Homer chose for epic, and what is appropriate for his *Histories*, and presents a rationalistic version of the story that Helen never went to Troy at all. Rather, she went to Egypt in the company of Paris when his ship was blown off course, and there the Memphite king Proteus, offended at Paris' behavior, sent the Trojan prince on his way without Helen, who remained safely in Egypt until restored to Menelaus.¹⁰⁴ Proteus' position in Herodotus as the third king after Sesostris is consistent with the Heraclid periodization used in the

¹⁰² Waddell fr. 53(a–b) = *FGrH* 609 F3a, F3b. A part of the story, though not the connection to Greek tradition, is also mentioned in Theophilus *ad Autolyc.* 3.20 (Waddell fr. 51 = *FGrH* 609 F9a). Theophilus is dependent on Josephus, but his quotation is corrupt.

¹⁰³ E.g., the Danaids brought the Thesmophoria rites to Greece from Egypt and taught them to the Pelasgian women (2.171.3). See Thomas 2001: 202 on the vagueness of the Pelasgians. On the basis of genealogical relations an approximate relative position in Greek chronology can be assigned to Danaus. He is about three or four generations after Deucalion, since at *Hdt.* 2.98 Danaus is described as the father-in-law of Archander, who is the son of Phthius and the grandson of Achaeus. This Achaeus is most likely Achaeus, the son of Xuthus, the grandson of Hellen. Cf. 7.94. His relationship to later genealogical chronology is less clear in Herodotus. At 2.91 Herodotus relates the story that Danaus (and Lynceus) came from the Egyptian town of Chemmis, and that according to the Egyptians, Danaus was an ancestor of Perseus, but the number of generations is not given.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 1. Euripides, of course, also made use of the myth of the phantom Helen who went to Troy.

Histories, and a date for the Trojan war about 800 years before his time.¹⁰⁵ Manetho places the fall of Troy at approximately the same point in the past in terms of the regnal years of his king-list, but his reference to this cycle is not mediated through Herodotus' use of epic variants. In referring to Polybus and Alcandra, who are not mentioned by Herodotus, Manetho, rather than depending on Greek historiography, appears to make an independent connection between an Egyptian royal name and one of the canonical Homeric epics.¹⁰⁶ The remaining reference to Greek chronology in the *Aegyptiaca* occurs only in the epitome of Africanus, and accurately places the celebration of the first Olympic festival in the reign of Manetho's 23rd Dynasty king Petubates. Manetho clearly does not depend on Herodotus here. The allusion may be to the system of dating by Olympiads that Timaeus of Tauromenium (ca. 350–260 BCE) developed, but if so the connection is only an incidental reference point. Timaeus did not employ synchronisms with Egyptian tradition, and Manetho did not adopt Timaeus' chronological framework for his later dynasties.

On the basis of these synchronisms with Greek tradition, it is at the very least apparent that Manetho did not reorganize Egyptian chronology according to Herodotus' Heraclid periodization. This choice has two dimensions. From an Egyptian perspective, he simply followed the material available to him from king-lists, royal inscriptions, and other indigenous chronological sources, and gave an Egyptian account of the Egyptian past in the form of a much more complete and accurate king-list than that presented in Herodotus.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, testimony of his *Criticisms of Herodotus*, and possible synchronisms with Greek reference points, suggest that Manetho did respond to Herodotus and the Greek tradition on Egypt. Understood as a critical, counter-discursive response, as an attempt to "write back" to Greek historical representations, Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* disassembles the continuous narrative of Herodotus' Heraclid period and subsumes some of its elements under the structure of the king-list. The possible synchronisms with Deucalion and Danaus, moreover, serve to expose and fill in gaps in Greek genealogical traditions – problems which Herodotus had already begun to examine as a result of his experience of

¹⁰⁵ Cf. 2.145, where he gives this approximate figure for the date of the Trojan war.

¹⁰⁶ Hecataeus, on the other hand, seems to have followed Herodotus. See the account of the Egyptian king Cetes in Diod. Sic. 1.62.1, who is equated with Proteus. There is also no sign in Diodorus that Hecataeus referred to Polybus and Alcandra. The epitomes of Manetho's 19th Dynasty are not in very good shape, but it is difficult to tell whether Manetho or the epitomators are to blame. Thuoris is perhaps the queen Twosre, the wife of Siptah, who ruled briefly at the end of the 19th Dynasty.

¹⁰⁷ Redford 1986a: 213–30 gives a summary of the sources on which Manetho likely drew.

Late Period Egyptian historical consciousness, but which he did not fully resolve. If the epitomes accurately represent the text of the *Aegyptiaca*, Manetho appears to have specifically addressed elements of the distant past in Greek tradition that Herodotus left hanging and, by pinning them down, definitively subsumed Greek chronology under the structure of the Egyptian king-list. As anthropological studies have shown, an awareness of gaps in chronologies based on oral genealogical traditions sometimes comes about in the colonial situation when traditional indigenous chronologies are confronted with the longer, continuously documented chronology of the colonizing power.¹⁰⁸ In this case, however, Manetho's king-list and not Greek historiography is analogous to the modern colonial temporality.

“EGYPTIAN NARRATIVE HISTORY”

In defining the significance of the *Aegyptiaca*, Manetho's use of the king-list is never seen as the source of his historiographical novelty; the king-list is only a source of historical data. What is usually considered the unprecedented native Egyptian achievement is that Manetho wrote – or rather he is assumed to have written – a continuous and complete narrative history of Egypt, under the influence of examples such as Herodotus. In this idea of Manetho's novelty lies a strategy of exclusion: a line drawn in the sand, beyond which (despite the great depth of the Egyptian recorded past) Egypt has no history – not “proper” history at any rate.¹⁰⁹ This is a persistent idea. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Walter Otto wrote that “The significance of Manetho's work lies not in what it achieved, but rather in the fact that for the first time an Egyptian made the attempt to offer a coherent/connected (*zusammenhängende*) representation of the entire history of his homeland.”¹¹⁰ And he is echoed by a study of Manetho at the end of the century: “while Manetho's history was built out of materials whose genres had existed for many centuries before the advent of Greco-Macedonian rule, it was only with the coming of Greek speakers in considerable numbers that a lengthy narrative history of Egypt was composed by an Egyptian.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Thomas 2001: 199–200, and also the excellent article by Calame 1998, which compares Herodotus' work of *historiopoiesis* to that of Michael Somare, the first indigenous prime minister of Papua New Guinea. See also more generally Henige 1974 and Vansina 1985.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. the dismissal of India from real history, despite its long literary tradition. Hegel 1975: 13.

¹¹⁰ Otto 1905–8: 2.229. See above, n. 50.

¹¹¹ Dillery 1999: 93, see also 105: “a remarkable situation obtains: a Greek historian makes his influence perhaps most strongly felt on Egyptian thought through modeling how Egyptian materials could be merged to generate narrative history.” Dillery also stresses the narrative aspect of Manetho's history in the title of his article: “The First Egyptian Narrative History.” This view is taken up by

Novelty, of course, posits a prior absence or deficiency. There may have been Egyptian narratives (and plenty of these survive), but they are deemed incomplete or insufficiently historical, and there may have been historical representations like king-lists and annals, but they are not narratives.¹¹² The distinctions drawn by assertions of Manetho's novelty are exactly parallel to the perceived (and self-expressed) novelty of Ramram Basu's history, *Raja Pratapaditya Caritra*.¹¹³ In essence they are the distinctions drawn in the *communis opinio* of modern Western historiography (as outlined by Hayden White) between premodern annals and chronicles, and the proper historical narrative.¹¹⁴ Following Hegel, White suggests that annals, in their lack of narrativity, lack a particular content: a sociopolitical order or legal system in relation to which a subjectivity can exist that is capable of endowing a bare chronological series of events with the meaning of narrative.¹¹⁵ Chronicles have this content, but no completeness (they simply end in the present), and therefore have no moral judgment, an essential aspect of narrative historiography. The incompleteness of the surviving *Aegyptiaca* fragments, of course, hinders a thoroughgoing analysis of the nature of Manetho's mode of historical representation in these terms, but the framework does help raise questions about the conventional characterization of

Bowman 2002: 209–10. See also Fraser 1972: 1,507: "The genuine excerpts in the Against Apion show clearly that Manetho wrote a continuous historical narrative based on ancient records, which in literary form at least – if not in purpose – closely resembled the work of Hecataeus." See also Sterling 1992: 18: "These priests [sc. Berosus and Manetho] collected their sacred traditions and wove them into a single narrative in which they presented Babylon and Egypt to the Hellenistic world." Mendels 1990: 91–92 takes a more balanced view, acknowledging the king-list form, but he still stresses one aspect of its novelty: "Such a comprehensive linear history had not been available until [Manetho]. The unavailability of a major linear history . . . is a result of the Egyptian concept of history."

¹¹² On the "historical" genres produced by ancient Egypt, see Redford 1986a. Scholars writing on Manetho (especially Classicists) usually give no reason for Manetho's novel historiography other than the arrival of Hellenism, and this implicitly falls in line with Droysen's (1877–78: 3,26) notion of the transferability of Greek civilization (though he does not explicitly mention Manetho): "Zugleich ist ein Material gewonnen, an dem man lernend sich zu der Höhe der Bildung zu erheben vermag; denn was ist Unterricht anders, als den Lernenden die Entwicklungsstufen, welche in langer und mühseliger Arbeit geschichtlich errungen und überwunden sind, in ihren wesentlichen Momenten geistig durchleben zu lassen; und die griechische Literatur in ihrer wundervollen Reihenfolge, die nun die lernenden Völkern Asiens zugeführt wird, enthält die Typen dieser Entwicklung in vollendeter Ausprägung. So kann die griechische Bildung also Object des Unterrichtes gebraucht und überliefert werden."

¹¹³ Guha 2002: 11. ¹¹⁴ White 1987: 1–25.

¹¹⁵ In discussing the types of history, Hegel does not tackle formal questions specifically, which he seems to take for granted, but rather the subjective relationship of the historian to his material, which (leaving aside philosophy of history) reaches its full maturity in what he calls the pragmatic type of reflective history. See Hegel 1975: 19–22. As Guha 2002 shows, the basis for excluding India is Hegel's distinction between the prose of the world, and the prose of history, and the particular content required for the development of the latter (i.e., the state, and the development of a subjectivity in relation to the state).

Manetho's novelty, and the assumptions that lie behind it. In what follows, I shall reconsider the "narrative" of the *Aegyptiaca*, paying particular attention to the question of continuity and completeness, as well as the content of the fragments, before addressing the "content of the form."

Interpreting the content and qualities of a narrative preserved only in fragments is a risky undertaking at the best of times, but when the fragments have been selected for use in an intense polemical debate over identities and origins, the dangers of misrepresentation are even greater. For comparative historiography, however, this hazard turns into a help, since Manetho appears to refer to recognizable material – material that was handled not only in the Exodus narrative of the Hebrew Bible, but also (and more importantly for the present investigation) by one of his predecessors in Greek historiography, Hecataeus of Abdera. Both Hecataeus and Manetho present hostile versions of the Exodus story, though from different perspectives. This circumstance, in which Greeks and non-Greeks observe and react to one another through a common focal point, provides a remarkable opportunity to triangulate their positions.¹¹⁶ For the present discussion, it provides a basis for setting the narratives of Hecataeus and Manetho alongside one another, on the assumption that they were handling the same material or at least the same general tradition of hostility. And since Hecataeus is dated slightly earlier than Manetho, it provides another opportunity for examining the question of influence or dependence.

I shall begin by outlining Hecataeus' version of the story, which is found in a fragment of Diodorus Siculus preserved by Photius (the ninth-century CE scholar and patriarch of Constantinople). The quotation comes from Book 40, when Diodorus recounts Jewish origins in a digression from his discussion of Pompey's entry into the temple at Jerusalem. In all probability, however, Hecataeus' story was not from a history of the Jews, but from his *Aegyptiaca*, and occurred in an account of the various colonies sent out by the Egyptians to various places: among them Babylon, the Greek cities of Argos and Athens, Colchis on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, and the land of the Jews.¹¹⁷ In the context of the present discussion, it is a peculiar

¹¹⁶ For the use of this triangulation of mutual perceptions centered on the figure of Moses in order to explore the origins of comparative religion, see Borgeaud 2004, whose stimulating study suggested this much more narrow comparison. See also Assmann 1997a and 1997b: 1–54, whose project of reconstructing the origins of the "Mosaic distinction" in a repressed historical memory of Akhenaten also goes beyond the present comparison between the versions of Manetho and Hecataeus.

¹¹⁷ Joseph. *Ap.* 1.183 cites a work by Hecataeus *On the Jews*, but it is not necessarily genuine. See Stern 1974: 21–24. Diod. Sic. 1.28 appears to be a summary of Hecataeus' account of Egyptian colonization, of which the fragment in Diod. Sic. 40.3 was originally a part. This account of Egyptian colonization is one of the texts that has led Martin Bernal astray.

irony that Hecataeus' polemical version of the Exodus story, written at the Ptolemaic court and with a view to the prestige of the new Graeco-Macedonian kingdom,¹¹⁸ takes the form of a typical Greek colonization narrative, but one in which the "metropolis" is Egypt.

The story goes as follows: in ancient times, according to Hecataeus, a pestilence arose in Egypt, and the common people (οἱ πολλοί) ascribed their troubles to the workings of a divine agency (τὸ δαιμόνιον). The natives of the land (οἱ τῆς χώρας ἐγγενεῖς) understood the cause of this divine displeasure to be the neglect of ancestral Egyptian customs, owing to the multitude of strangers in their midst, each practicing their own religion. The aliens were driven from the land forthwith. Hecataeus is not clear as to the time of this event, or where these "strangers" in Egypt came from. Showing his pride in Greek dynamism, however, he notes that the "most outstanding and active" of those expelled from Egypt ended up in Greece and other regions, led by notable men such as Danaus and Cadmus. Here is the usual Danaid connection between Egypt and Argos, though Cadmus is usually considered a Phoenician.¹¹⁹ This was surely meant to relocate another great founder to the new kingdom of the Ptolemies. In any case, the greater number of the aliens (with all the pejorative connotations of a multitude) were driven into the uninhabited land of Judaea. And here the story becomes most explicitly assimilated to a Greek colonial foundation narrative. The new community is, in fact, called a colony (ἀποικία), and Moses, the leader of this group of exiles, acts as a founder, establishing cities, notably Jerusalem, and instituting religion, laws, and a political constitution. The characterization of Moses to this point seems relatively positive, and the story of the Jews only mildly critical, but Hecataeus' ethnographical account of their religious institutions and their way of life begins a much more hostile stereotype of impious and misanthropic Jews: "The sacrifices that he [Moses] established differ from those of other nations," Hecataeus writes, "as does their way of living, for as a result of their own expulsion from Egypt he introduced an unsocial and intolerant mode of life."¹²⁰ The same expulsion from Egypt, which presumably serves as a positive beginning for the Greeks and their customs, becomes the cause of Jewish alienation.

¹¹⁸ On the propagandistic dimension of Hecataeus' *Aegyptiaca*, see Murray 1970 and 1972: 207; Fraser thinks this interpretation likely if conjectural (1972: 1.497, 1.504 and 2.721 n. 18).

¹¹⁹ Hecataeus is probably also the source for Diodorus' idea (1.23.4) that Cadmus originated from Egyptian Thebes.

¹²⁰ Diod. Sic. 40.3.4: τὰς δὲ θυσίας ἐξηλλαγμένας συνεστήσατο τῶν παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἔθνεσι καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀγωγὰς· διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἰδίαν ξενηλασίαν ἀπάνθρωπόν τινα καὶ μισόξενον βίον εἰσηγήσατο.

Manetho's version of the exodus, as several scholars have pointed out, exhibits many of the same motifs: disease, expulsion, a law-giver, the characterization of the exiles as impious and antisocial, and so forth. Hecataeus and Manetho, however, organize these elements into narrative form in entirely different ways. Hecataeus combines a unified and recognizably Greek colonization narrative with an ethnographic discourse, and the use of these patterns shows his interest in Greek modes of responding to crisis, Greek ways of founding new communities, and Greek religious, social, and political institutions. Manetho's account differs in two fundamental respects: (1) it is a segmented narrative, unfolding in four distinct parts, and (2) unlike Hecataeus, in which the king is entirely absent and "the multitude" (οἱ πολλοί) or "the natives of the land" (οἱ τῆς χώρας ἐγγενεῖς) initiate the action, the king and the ideology of pharaonic kingship are at the centre of his account. In a history patterned after the structure of an Egyptian king-list, these two features are neither surprising nor unrelated, and with them in mind, I shall briefly outline the Josephus fragments of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*.

Josephus introduces his discussion of these fragments by describing Manetho's authoritative position as a priest competent both in Greek and in the language of the "sacred books" from which he translates his history, and then begins a verbatim quotation from his account of the disastrous Hyksos invasion of Egypt. The first phrase of this fragment captures Manetho's central concerns and his skill in translating them into the Greek language:

†Τουτίμαιος† ἐπὶ τούτου οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως θεὸς ἀντέπνευσεν . . .

†Toutimaios†: Under this king, I do not know in what manner, a god raged (lit. blew) against us . . .

The name of the king comes first: a royal rubric reminding the reader of the king-list structure in which this narrative was set. With the next phrase, the royal rubric turns into a lemma, since the preposition and demonstrative pronoun (ἐπὶ τούτου) seem to cast the narrative that follows as a commentary on the king's reign. Then comes this enigmatic phrase: "I do not know in what manner, a god raged against us" (οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως θεὸς ἀντέπνευσεν . . .). Nothing illustrates Manetho's dual cultural and linguistic position better than this.¹²¹ The Greek verb ἀντιπνέω (literally

¹²¹ Dillery 1999: 99–100 has argued that the refined nature of Manetho's Greek expression reveals a Greek orientation. To judge by Josephus' quotations, Manetho does write Greek well, and I agree with Dillery's appraisal of his use of particles (1999: 99). But Dillery further argues that Manetho's

“blew against/in a contrary fashion”) is often used in its strict meteorological sense of winds clashing in a storm or whirlwind. Naturally enough this verb was also sometimes employed in nautical metaphors for a change of fortune, usually with Fortune itself (τύχη) or some other personification as its subject.¹²² Manetho’s expression, then, is not alien to Greek idiom, and the lexical choice is appropriate given the context of disaster and the reversal of Egypt’s fortunes. On the other hand, this verb occurs nowhere else in Greek literature with a god as the subject, and the phrase θεὸς ἀντίπνευσεν “a god (blew/raged) against . . .” carries Egyptian resonances that are appropriate to the circumstances of Manetho’s narrative. In Egyptian texts, verbs such as *ḏc* (“storm”) or *nšn* (“rage”) were used both of powerful windstorms and of their divine causes.¹²³ In the Demotic teachings of ‘Onchsheshonqy, preserved in a papyrus of Ptolemaic date, divine rage was synonymous with the overthrow of social and religious norms. Each of a series of thirteen proverbs describing such conditions begins with the phrase “When (the god) Prê rages against a district . . .” (*in-nšw P3-r-c ḥcr r*

Greek orientation is revealed in his use of a participial phrase for an official title (ὁ δὲ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῶν ἱερέων τῆς Αἰγύπτου) rather than Egyptian nominal parallels as found in the Canopus Decree. The latter parallels are, however, misunderstood, since they are based on translations by E. A. Wallis Budge and Wilhelm Spiegelberg. In fact, the Greek and Egyptian expressions are much more similar to Manetho’s participial phrase than Dillery suggests. The Demotic phrase that Dillery cites as a noun actually uses a relative converter with a qualitative verbal form (*nt ip*) as an equivalent of a perfect participle in order to modify a paralexical relative expression: *p3 rmf nt šn* (see Spiegelberg 1925: 241–42, §534 and Simpson 1996: 55–56). The hieroglyphic text uses the Middle Egyptian participle *nd(w)* as a substantive (on hieroglyphic equivalents to Greek participial phrases in the sacerdotal decrees, see Daumas 1952: 102–9). There is, in short, a much closer correspondence than Dillery suggests between these Egyptian grammatical constructions and the phrase that Manetho uses. Manetho, as I shall argue below, shows signs of careful and creative translation between Egyptian and Greek concepts.

¹²² Though used regularly in its literal sense, the earliest metaphorical use of ἀντίπνέω (as described above) is a fragment of the philosopher Hermarchus, a contemporary of Epicurus (late fourth–early third century BCE): ἀντίπνέει δὲ πολλάκις εὐτυχίαις δεινὴ τις αὔρα (fr. 24 = Longo Auricchio 1988: 65). A similar sentiment is found in a fragment of the philosopher Clitomachus (c. 187/6–110/9 BCE): τοῖς εὐπλοοῦσιν ἀντιπνεύσασ’ ἡ τύχη | ἅπαντα συγχέει, κᾶτα ναυαγεῖν ποιεῖ. Clitomachus may have been quoting an earlier tragedian (see *TrGF* 546a and note *ad loc.*). There are, at any rate, parallels in classical Athenian tragedy. A cognate adjective (ἀντίπνους) is found at the end of the *Prometheus Bound*, for example, when Zeus stirs up storm winds against Prometheus (line 1087). The idea of a god causing a change in the wind of fortune is found in Eur. *HF* 216. Aside from Manetho, the earliest metaphorical use of ἀντίπνέω in a prose author is in Polyb. 23.3.9 (second century BCE): ὅτε δὲ πάλιν τὰ τῆς τύχης ἀντίπνευσε . . . Dion. Hal. 8.49.5 (first century BCE to first century CE) also uses ἀντίπνέω in this metaphorical way: ἑτέρα πάλιν ἀντιπνεύσασα τοῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων κατορθώμασι τύχη τούτων μὲν ἐταπείνωσε τὰς ἐλπίδας, τὰ δὲ τῶν πολεμίων φρονήματα ἐπῆρεν. In the latter author, envy (φθόνος) may also be the malevolent agent. The word on its own came to have connotations of adversity, even without direct reference to fortune. Philo of Alexandria (first century BCE to first century CE) uses ἀντίπνους as a substantive to refer to adversity or changes in fortune (*De mutatione nominum* 95; *De Josepho* 149). See also Lucian (second century CE) *Tox.* 7 (εἰ δὲ τι καὶ μικρὸν ἀντιπνεύσειεν αὐτοῖς).

¹²³ See Redford 1986a: 241.

τῷ . . .), and then indicates a particular dire consequence of divine anger.¹²⁴ Though Manetho professes ignorance of the manner in which this wrath manifested itself (οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως), the phrase suggests the expectation that some disruption of the order of things (Maat – *Mḥ.t*) afflicted Egypt at the time of the Hyksos invasion.

In the case of Manetho's narrative of the Hyksos invasion, the allusion to a windstorm has specific significance, since it suggests the Egyptian divinity who is normally the hostile agent in such circumstances. The god Seth, equated with the Greek Typhon, was frequently identified as the master of the storm.¹²⁵ In fact, the hieroglyphic writing of the word *nšn* ("rage") used an image of the fabulous Seth-animal as a determinative. Seth was also consistently associated with foreigners, especially those from the northeast, and typified the invasive, chaotic, external forces against which Egypt, her gods, and her king constantly struggled. The specific image of the Hyksos striking Egypt as a storm may even go back to the period immediately following the expulsion of the Hyksos by Ahmose. The so-called "Tempest Stele" erected by Ahmose uses the metaphor of a powerful storm to describe the destruction of the entire land of Egypt by the Hyksos invaders.¹²⁶ In short, the Greek verb ἀντιπνέω, though an appropriate choice to express a change in fortune, also points to verbs such as *dꜥ*, *nšn*, or *ḥꜥr*, and the Sethian imagery appropriate for the Hyksos invasion. As J. Yoyotte and others have pointed out, Manetho's polemical version of Jewish origins is presented according to a Late Period Egyptian image of the foreigner. In his account, the ruthlessness and impiety of these Hyksos invaders, who burn the cities, raze the temples, and slaughter or enslave the population evokes the traditional Egyptian imagery of Seth, and the Hyksos in turn also became a paradigm to which outsiders and enemies were repeatedly assimilated.¹²⁷

After this conquest, Manetho writes, the invaders made one of their number, named Salitis, king, and he built forts and garrisons throughout Egypt. The most important of these was situated in the northeast Delta and named Avaris according to an ancient religious tradition.¹²⁸ There

¹²⁴ Onchsheshonqy col. 5, lines 1–13 (see Glanville 1955 and Thissen 1984).

¹²⁵ Te Velde 1977: 99–108.

¹²⁶ Ryholt 1997: 144–48. For an English translation of the text, see that of Ritner in Foster, Ritner, and Foster 1996: 11–12. In the latter article, the authors suggest that the Tempest Stele may record the consequences of the volcanic eruption of Thera, though Ryholt (1997) argues that the storm described is metaphorical.

¹²⁷ Yoyotte 1963. See also Redford 1986a: 276–73.

¹²⁸ Though Manetho does not elaborate, this is most likely a reference to the important cult of Seth of Avaris (for the question of Hyksos religion, see Ryholt 1997: 148–50). The site of Avaris has been located at modern Tell el-Dab'a. See Bierak 1981 and Bierak 1996.

Salitis conducted military maneuvers to frighten away potential invaders. Manetho concludes his comments on Salitis by giving the number of years he reigned, and then he resumes the king-list, giving the rest of his 15th Dynasty. At this point, Josephus gives Manetho's explanation of the name Hyksos as "Shepherd Kings," and then passes over the period of Hyksos rule to pick up the story of their expulsion. Though the epitomes are bare summaries at this point, it is clear that in the original *Aegyptiaca*, the king-lists of the 16th and 17th dynasties would have occupied the gap between these two parts of the narrative. In the second of the narrative segments recorded by Josephus, the Egyptian king Misphegmutosis¹²⁹ drives the Hyksos invaders into one corner of Egypt at the fortified city of Avaris, and his son and successor Thummosis, after an unsuccessful siege, eventually persuades them to accept a treaty and depart from the borders of Egypt, thus restoring the integrity of the land. The Hyksos (the Shepherd Kings) then move into Judaea and found the city of Jerusalem, rather than Moses, the founder-figure (*ktistēs*) of Hecataeus' account. Although Josephus' commentary on the name of the Hyksos equates them with the Jews, Manetho does not, in fact, explicitly do so at this point. The connection between the Hyksos and the Jews is not made clear until the fourth narrative segment in Josephus.

When Josephus introduces the third segment, he includes Manetho's list of kings and their reign lengths from the expulsion of the Hyksos down to the subject of the narrative, Sethos, who is also called Rameses. The story of this king, however simple, alludes to central concerns of Egyptian kingship: military conquest, maintaining legitimate succession, and fighting against rebellious usurpation.¹³⁰ Sethos is the military pharaoh par excellence, and sets out on campaign against Cyprus, Phoenicia, the lands of the Assyrians and the Medes, and points even further East. While he is away, however, his brother Harmaïs, who has been appointed viceroy, usurps royal prerogatives from which he had been instructed to refrain, i.e. the symbols and the persons connected with legitimate dynastic succession:

¹²⁹ This seems to be a conflation of the names Menkheperre and Thuthmose (III). The actual king who drove them out was Ahmose. Grimal 1992: 192–95; Ryholt 1997: 186–90, 308–9.

¹³⁰ Dillery 1999: 99–102 argues that this story is "Greek in orientation" (99) on the basis of its language, narrative style, and story motifs, and suggests the reason for this orientation is the influence of Greek stories about Sesostris (102). On the other hand, the narrative motifs that Dillery cites as particularly Greek (reversal of fortune, bad advisors, postponement of critical information for dramatic effect) are all found in Egyptian literature (and many other literatures as well). Dillery does acknowledge the possibility of Egyptian sources for this story, but he holds up the Sesostris legends as "Greek" models for Manetho, an idea that is problematic now that the Sesostris story is attested in two Demotic manuscripts (Widmer 2002: 387–93).

the crown, the queen who is the mother of the king's children, and the royal concubines (who could also potentially produce heirs). These outrages are reported to the king by the overseer of the priests of Egypt, a trusted official, who remains loyal to the pharaoh. Manetho, no doubt, is here asserting the indispensable relationship of king and priest in maintaining legitimate kingship. As a result of this warning, Sethos returns to Pelusium and retakes his kingdom. At the very end of this segment, the rebellious brother Harmais is equated with Danaus, and Sethos with Aegyptus. I have already discussed the independence of this equation from Greek chronological traditions. From the perspective of the narrative in which it is embedded it also comes as something of a surprise, since (apart from the sibling rivalry) the story bears little resemblance to the usual Greek traditions about Danaus, and virtually none to Hecataeus' colonization narrative.¹³¹

The fourth narrative segment, the longest and most elaborate, comes after the reigns of Sethos and his son Rampses in the king-list. For the first part of the story, Josephus gives a paraphrase. The king Amenophis desired to see a vision of the gods, like his predecessor Hor, so he presented his request to his namesake, the seer Amenophis, son of Paapis (the renowned Egyptian sage Amenhotep, son of Hapy). This man said that the king would be able to behold the gods if he purified the land of lepers and other polluted persons, so the king gathered 80,000 of them together and cast them into the stone quarries. Among those excluded, however, were some priests. The sage Amenophis was suddenly overcome with fear of the gods' wrath at this harsh treatment of the people (no doubt the priests in particular), so he supplemented his earlier statement with a written prediction that certain allies would join the polluted, and they would gain control of Egypt for thirteen years. The king was despondent.

Josephus then switches to word-for-word quotation from Manetho. The outcasts prevailed upon the king to allow them to move to the city of Avaris, which they promptly used as a base for revolt. They swore allegiance to a certain Osarseph (later identified with Moses), who established new laws for them, including ones inimical to Egyptian customs regarding sacred

¹³¹ Josephus includes this narrative, which has no direct bearing on the story of Jewish origins, at this place in the *Contra Apionem* solely in order to assert the chronological priority of the Shepherd Kings/Jews over the Greeks (see §104). In Manetho, however, the reverse appears to be true. Though Jerusalem is acknowledged as an ancient foundation, it is (strictly speaking) taken out of the hands of the Jews, who are placed chronologically later than the Greeks. The Jews are also given origins among the polluted, as the next section reveals, while the Greek "colonist" Danaus is actually connected to the royal family. Manetho has told the story to sharpen the Greek–Egyptian connection, and also the connection between the Hyksos/Sethian foreigner imagery and the Jews.

animals, and antisocial towards other peoples. Osarseph led an embassy to the "Shepherds," the Hyksos who had been driven out and founded Jerusalem, and gained them as allies in their struggle against the king Amenophis. The Egyptian king was troubled because he remembered the prophecy. "He gathered a multitude of Egyptians, and having taken counsel with the leaders among them, he summoned the sacred animals to himself that were particularly revered in the temples, and he gave the word to each group of priests to hide the images of the gods as securely as possible."¹³² He then made arrangements for the safety of his son, and set off for battle. The king soon realized, however, that he must not struggle against the will of the gods, so he retreated to Memphis, took up the Apis bull and all the other sacred animals, and made southwards for the safety of Ethiopia. There he and his host stayed for the designated thirteen years, while the Shepherds/Solymites/polluted Egyptians desecrated Egypt:

For not only did they burn cities and villages, nor refrain from plundering temples and defiling the images of the gods, but they also continually used the inner sanctuaries of the sacred animals which the people revered for kitchens, and forced the priests and prophets to become the sacrificers and butchers of these same animals, thereafter casting the men out naked.¹³³

After the thirteen years, Amenophis and his son Rampses drove the foreigners out of Egypt and all the way to Syria, reestablishing Egyptian rule.

Right from the beginning, this narrative segment manifests a particularly Egyptian interest in representing the Exodus story, an interest that pushes kingship, the priesthood, and important elements of Egyptian religion to the fore. While in the version of Hecataeus, the pharaoh and the priest are nowhere to be found, Manetho, by contrast, begins the chain of events at court, in the communication between king and priestly advisor, after the fashion of an Egyptian "King's novel" (*Königsnovelle*).¹³⁴ The king has a

¹³² Joseph. *Ap.* 1.246. ¹³³ Joseph. *Ap.* 1.249.

¹³⁴ For the initial definition of the *Königsnovelle*, see Hermann 1938. Since then there has been considerable debate over the usefulness of this literary category, on which see, e.g., Loprieno 1996. Under the most basic definition, the *Königsnovelle* is simply a narrative about an episode in a king's life. As Loprieno has pointed out (1996: 286–90) this literary form become especially prominent in the New Kingdom and Late Period as part of a broader pattern of literary explorations of the position and limits of a "humanized" king vis-à-vis the gods and humanity. The success of the king in this context is measured in terms of his adherence to divine will and the well-being of his people. Though Loprieno views this aspect of Egyptian literature much more broadly as "a horizontal, diastatic set of formal patterns covering the entire spectrum of Egyptian writing" (295), he nevertheless does recognize a set of typical features of the *Königsnovelle*, including historical settings, discussions between king and counsellors, and other narrative elements. According to

desire to see the gods, and the wise seer Amenophis reveals that the king can achieve this feat if he cleanses the land of lepers and other polluted persons. And it is Amenophis who warns the king of the punishment to come as a result of his harsh treatment of those sent to the quarries. The disruptive, rebellious forces of the group under the leadership of Osarseph are, like the Hyksos, assimilated to Seth. These enemies are brutal and impious, while the king, despite his earlier misdeed, shows appropriate concern for the sacred animals and images of Egypt, and attempts to preserve them from the foreigners. He is prepared to make a stand in defense of Egypt, until he realizes that he would be struggling against divine will. And even in his retreat to Ethiopia, he safeguards the Apis bull and other sacred animals, who had become a particularly prominent feature of Egyptian religion in the Late Period. Finally, this rupture in the integrity of the land and inversion of the Egyptian order ends with the victorious king driving out the enemy and (implicitly) restoring Maat (*M^c.t*), the divine principle of order, truth, and justice.

These Egyptian elements are generally undisputed, and indeed several commentators have illuminated this dimension of the *Aegyptiaca* in much more detail than is possible here.¹³⁵ The normative message purveyed by the texts is not surprising, since Manetho would have drawn these stories from the wealth of Egyptian narrative literature preserved in temple libraries. Stories that were written, read, and copied in that context tended to preserve and reinforce the values and identities of the indigenous élite.¹³⁶ In the present study, I am most interested in reconsidering the formal quality of Manetho's stories, especially the question of narrativity, and its specific meaning in the *Aegyptiaca*. The comparison between Hecataeus

Loprieno, the king is presented "as the hero of a (real or fictional) historical episode in which a state of uncertainty or deficiency is overcome by his word or his decision: for example, building activity is renewed or completed, hitherto inaccessible knowledge is discovered and employed for ritual purposes, entrepreneurial operations are fostered by the king's liveliness, the health of a foreign princess is restored [*sic*] by his sending to her a divine statue, military challenges are averted thanks to his energetic intervention" (280).

¹³⁵ See especially Yoyotte 1963 and Redford 1986a: 259–96.

¹³⁶ A recent study of the contents of the temple library at Tebtunis (Ryholt 2005) has shown that in addition to all the cultic and technical material that one would expect priests to preserve, narrative literature made up 25 percent of the literary material. Ryholt has also observed that the narrative compositions preserved in temple libraries were the source of the material on which Manetho drew (see especially Ryholt 2005: 162–63). In addition to Manetho's reference to the *Prophecy of the Lamb* discussed below, his *Aegyptiaca* may have included a story now attested in a fragmentary *Life of Imhotep* (P. Carlsb. 85). This papyrus refers to a Libyan revolt against Egypt in the reign of Djoser. This may be the same story of a Libyan revolt averted owing to a marvelous waxing of the moon reported by Manetho in his account of the 3rd Dynasty (Waddell frs. 11–12 = FGrH 609 F2, F3a, F3b). On this reference, see Ryholt 2009.

and Manetho shows that common motifs, integrated into a single story in the former, have been distributed over several narrative segments in the latter. These narratives are interrelated, but kept formally distinct by intervening lists of kings. The segments also manifest a division into units in the repeated, periodic pattern of "dissolution and restoration" familiar to Egyptian myth and portrayals of the pharaoh.¹³⁷ This pattern, in which some combination of (moral, legal, religious) transgression, divine anger, and foreign invasion is overcome by the king as savior of Egypt, recurs three times. In the first, the account of the Hyksos, "dissolution" occurs in the first segment, and then "restoration" comes in the second segment. In the other two cases, the rebellion of Harmaïs and the story of Amenophis, the pattern is contained within one segment. Though there are connections between the Hyksos and the followers of Osarseph, at least one complete and unconnected narrative intervenes, along with sections of king-list. The repeated pattern of these surviving narratives is explicitly linked (by the raging of the storm god, by the city of Avaris, by the disruptive foreigners invading from the North) to the paradigm of the mythical struggle between Horus and Seth, a struggle that deals with questions of royal legitimacy and succession as much as with antagonisms plotted on a geographical plan.¹³⁸ In this regard, it seems significant that in the stories both of the expulsion of the Hyksos, and of the expulsion of the followers of Osarseph, the "restoration" is accomplished by a father-son pair. In the Harmaïs story, moreover, the central concern is legitimate succession. The content of this narrative pattern seems to be pharaonic kingship, and – in various manifestations – its crises.

To explore further the "content of the form" in Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, I turn now from the metanarrative of "dissolution and restoration" evident in the Josephus fragments back to the formal structure in which they were originally embedded, and for which (to judge by the opening words of the first segment) they served as commentaries.

"THE CONTENT OF THE FORM": KING-LIST, PROPHECY, AND
PHARAONIC IDEOLOGY

Manetho's use of the king-list as an organizing principle for his history can be illuminated in relation to other situations and forms in which this structure was employed by Egyptian priests and scribes. In their most

¹³⁷ This is the terminology of Redford 1986a: 259–75.

¹³⁸ See Shafer 1991: 93; Smith 1978: 74 also notes this pattern.

prominent traditional manifestations, assemblages of kings' names had a cultic function. Aside from the Turin Canon, the most extensive of the surviving king-lists are the Abydos lists of Sety I and Rameses II. The former is a relief depicting Sety making offerings before a monumental display of seventy-six cartouches of his deceased royal predecessors. The list of Rameses II, now in the British Museum, shows Rameses before an identical array to which Sety's name has been added.¹³⁹ Such lists could also appear in a private funerary context, as in the tomb chapel of the chief lector priest Tjuloy at Saqqara.¹⁴⁰ A relief showed the tomb's owner officiating at the offering to the royal ancestors, represented by fifty-eight cartouches. The king-list as a genre is, therefore, at the intersection of relations between the king, the king's predecessors, and the priestly class as his religious representatives. In monumental lists such as those at Abydos, the piety shown toward the deceased, divinized pharaohs is a religious expression of the current king's continuity with the long succession of royal predecessors, and a visual representation of the principle of legitimacy embedded in a series of examples from the past.

By the early Ptolemaic period, these were monuments of a distant and glorious past, but still present and accessible to a learned priest like Manetho, who may have used such inscriptions along with documents like the Turin Canon in composing his own king-list.¹⁴¹ Indirect evidence suggests that various kinds of king-lists continued to be copied and composed into the Late Period and beyond, at the very least for practical reasons.¹⁴² In the Ptolemaic period, the Egyptian king-list tradition – especially in its religious and ideological functions – underwent a revival through the

¹³⁹ See Redford 1986a: 18–20; note also the Karnak list of Thutmose III, now in the Louvre (Redford 1986a: 29–34).

¹⁴⁰ Redford 1986a: 21–23. See also the biographical text on the niched chapel wall of Ptahshepses which narrates the subject's life over the reigns of four kings, thus giving biography a king-list structure (Dorman 2002).

¹⁴¹ On the probable sources that Manetho used, see Redford 1986a: 206–29.

¹⁴² In some Late Period genealogies, e.g. the eighth-century BCE genealogy of the Memphite priests discussed above in Chapter 1, the kings under whom certain priests lived are named with a degree of plausibility that suggests the availability of king-lists (Redford 1986a: 203). The *Demotic Chronicle*, discussed below, in part follows the structure of a king-list. In addition to the other Ptolemaic king-lists discussed below, and the ubiquitous lists that were part of the titles of eponymous priests used to date Greek and Demotic documents, there are a few king-lists preserved in papyri ranging in date from the late Ptolemaic period to the Byzantine era. A list of Ptolemies and regnal years is found in *P.Duke* 4 verso, dated to the first century BCE. *P.Oxy.* 19.2222 is a fragmentary list of Ptolemaic kings and reign lengths dated to the first century CE; the part that survives covers Ptolemy VI Philometor to Cleopatra VII. *P.Oxy.* 31.2551, a third- or fourth-century CE papyrus, contains parts of an astronomical text and a king-list that stretches from the first Persian domination to the reign of Philip the Arab in the Roman period (see also Sattler 1962 and Azzarello 2005). *P.Bal.* 1 55 is an eighth-century CE Coptic text with a list of Ptolemaic rulers.

introduction of the dynastic cult into Egyptian temples under Ptolemy III. The use of the titles of the Greek eponymous priests of Alexander and the Ptolemies in the dating formula of all official documents had already begun a process that would make lists of the Ptolemaic rulers ubiquitous. In the reign of Ptolemy IV, brief king-lists of the reigning Ptolemy's ancestors began to appear in hieroglyphic Egyptian inscriptions on temple walls and other monuments. The epigraphic formulae in which they were embedded, along with visual parallels to the lists in temple scenes of offerings to the deceased Ptolemies, show that these brief lists functioned to legitimate the ruling king and the Ptolemaic dynasty in much the same way as the Abydos lists of Sety I and Rameses II. Indeed, the Abydos lists may well have served as religious and ideological templates for the Ptolemaic lists, even if the latter were restricted in length to the Ptolemaic dynasty alone.¹⁴³

Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* was composed at least a generation earlier than the first known attestation of the hieroglyphic king-lists found in temple inscriptions, and it treats the kings of the past, rather than the ruling dynasty. Nevertheless, it can be understood, in its ideological orientation, as a forerunner to the Ptolemaic revival and reinvention of this genre. Manetho's work forms a bridge between older king-list traditions and the Ptolemaic versions found in documents and temple inscriptions. His king-list, of course, does not operate on a cultic or monumental level, but its structure does deal in another way with the question of legitimate kingship. It does so by inviting comparison of its constituents to one another and to an ideal implied by "good" and "bad" kings, and their fates. Some of the abbreviated comments preserved in the epitome suggest a positive or negative portrait of kingship. In Manetho's early dynasties, several kings are credited with important religious, intellectual, or building activities. Athothis, for example, in the 1st Dynasty, is described as a builder, and author of works on anatomy. Under Kaiechos of the 2nd Dynasty begins the worship of the sacred Apis and Mnevis bulls, and the Mendesian goat, so important in Late Period Egyptian religion. Tosorthros (the historical

¹⁴³ On the Abydos lists as precedents for the Ptolemaic lists, see Minas 2000: 74–79. One hundred examples of the Ptolemaic lists, found on temple walls, stelae, and foundation texts, are catalogued in Minas 2000: 3–79. A particularly noteworthy scene of offering to the ancestors is her Document 51 (p. 24, pl. 17), a relief on the façade of the temple of Montu at Tôd showing Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II offering to Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy Eupator, Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I, Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III, Ptolemy III and Berenike II, Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II. This intersection of the king-list and the offering scene gives the clearest visual parallel to the Abydos lists. Minas also compares the hieroglyphic lists with the lists included in the titles of the eponymous priests. For an overview, see Minas 2000: 173–96.

Djoser), in the 3rd Dynasty, is also associated with building and medical wisdom. The military prowess associated with pharaonic kingship is, of course, represented by Sesostri in Manetho's 12th Dynasty, and by the conquests of Sethos. In at least one case, however, the epitome suggests that Manetho invoked a negative example of kingship. The entry for Achthoes of the 9th Dynasty states that this king "behaving more cruelly than his predecessors, wrought woes for the people of Egypt, but afterwards he was smitten with madness, and was killed by a crocodile." The original narrative condensed into this brief account of royal misdeed and divine punishment¹⁴⁴ may have illustrated an aspect of Egyptian kingship in Manetho's era that is also evident in the Amenophis narrative. The ideological infallibility of the king seems to have been relativized in the context of political instability and frequent foreign rule during the Late Period. The legitimacy of the king and the divine authorization of his office were represented more and more as dependent on the king's ethical or moral behavior with regard to the traditional values of Egyptian kingship.

In this regard, Manetho's king-list can be compared to the so-called *Demotic Chronicle*, preserved in a papyrus of the third century BCE.¹⁴⁵ The text, probably composed in the period roughly contemporary with Manetho, is not really an historical chronicle, but rather a series of oracular statements, interpreted according to the reigns of Egyptian kings, from Amyrtaios, who assumed the throne in 404 BCE at the end of the first Persian occupation, to the joint reign of Nectanebo I and Tachos (365–362 BCE). The latter period is the dramatic date of the prophetic utterances in the *Chronicle*, some of which are addressed directly to Nectanebo I. The subsequent prophetic statements (which ostensibly look to the future) together with their explanations give an account of the coming of troubles under the second Persian domination, and of the alleviation of suffering under the Greeks. Finally, the text predicts the rise of a man of Herakleopolis, a follower of the god Herishef, who will rule as an ideal pharaoh.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Death by drowning in the Nile, or being killed by a crocodile were common ways of representing divine punishment in Egyptian narratives. See, e.g., the "Tale of the Doomed Prince," trans. E. F. Wente in Simpson et al. 2003: 75–79. Note that "the crocodiles will seize them" (*r nš msh.w r ʔ=w*) is a phrase explicated in the *Demotic Chronicle* (col. 5, line 17). Cf. also the account of Suphis in Manetho's 4th Dynasty (*FGrH* 609 F2, F3a, F3b) – perhaps warding off destruction for his impiety by repenting and composing a sacred treatise.

¹⁴⁵ Johnson 1983: 62–63; see also Felber 2002: 68 who notes palaeographical grounds for dating it to the second half of the third century BCE. The content of the text confirms that it was written after the advent of Ptolemaic rule, and Felber (ibid.) would like to date it to the reign of Ptolemy III, though I am not confident that it can be so precisely dated on the basis of his interpretation of the text.

¹⁴⁶ For the temporal structure of the *Demotic Chronicle*, see fig. 1 and the discussion below.

As Janet Johnson has demonstrated, the explanations of these *ex eventu* prophecies contain numerous statements which outline a theory of legitimate kingship. The rule of Amyrtaios, for example, ends and his son is prevented from succeeding because of his illegal actions:¹⁴⁷

sf p3 iir šm. d p3 hry h3t ir iy m-s3 n3 h3s.wt nt iw n3 Mty n3y. d Pr-3 'Imn-ir-ti-s.
n-dr | <ir=w> tm-hp p3y=f h3 ti=w ir=f n3 šm.w <n> sf. mn p3 ir-hry m-dr p3y=f
šr m-s3=f

...

mḥ-1 iir=f d mḥ-1 iir iy m-s3 n3 Mty.w n-dr <ir>=f šn r tm hp nw=w r n3y
ir=w n=f bn-pw=w ti šp n=f p3y=f šr | p3 bnr ti=w lk=f s h3t=f hr p3y=f thm3
iw=f ʕnh

It is yesterday which has gone. That is: the first ruler who came after the foreigners, who are the Medes, Pharaoh Amyrtaios, when violation of the law was done (in) his time, he was caused to make the movements (of) yesterday; there was no rule of his son after him.

...

The first: it means the first who came after the Medes, since he gave orders not to (carry out) the law, the things which were done to him were seen: his son was not allowed to succeed him; but, instead, he was caused to remove himself (from) upon his throne while he was alive.

Ideally, the king preserved justice, truth, and cosmic order, all encapsulated in the Egyptian concept of Maat (or in this case *hp* "law"), so when he deviated from this path, his rule was no longer legitimate, nor was the succession of his son to his office. Conversely, those kings in the *Demotic Chronicle* who act properly are considered legitimate; they are allowed to complete their reigns, and to be succeeded by their sons. Aside from respect for law, actions of the ideal king in the *Demotic Chronicle* include coronation according to proper ritual, protecting Egypt from invasion, maintaining religious observances, and exhibiting beneficence to the temples.¹⁴⁸

The *Demotic Chronicle* is also comparable to Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* in the formal, literary structures through which it interprets the past and elaborates a theory of kingship. In both of these texts, the theory is not explicitly stated in any abstract form, but resides in the juxtapositions and interstices of the list as a generic form. This practice of implicit theory

¹⁴⁷ *Demotic Chronicle* col. 3, ll. 18–19–col. 4, ll. 1–2.

¹⁴⁸ Johnson 1983. On the last two counts it is significant to note that Tachos, who raided temple inventories to finance a Syrian war (aided by the Athenian general Chabrias), is criticized. Nectanebo I also takes much of the blame for this illegal behavior (see Felber 2002: 101–5). On the other hand, it is predicted that the man of Herakleopolis will dutifully carry out his religious obligations.

is comparable to what has been called *Listenwissenschaft* in the study of Mesopotamian texts: a learned scribal habit in which the creation of lists or catalogs (of animals, plants, places, events, omens, etc.) elaborates a body of knowledge by referring particular items to each other, to a category, classification, or paradigm, or (in the case of historical events) to paradigmatic precedents. At times such lists are expanded through the inclusion of exegetical comments on particular items.¹⁴⁹ The *Demotic Chronicle* is a particularly complex example, in which the scribe explains a list of oracular statements in relation to a list of kings, and in explaining the significance of the kings' reigns compares each to an implicit paradigm of kingship. The understanding of the past that undergirds this practice is a Late Period Egyptian manifestation of Erik Hornung's idea of *Geschichte als Fest*: a normative way of representing history, in which the significance of a particular royal action lies in fulfilling a prescribed role (as it does in cult).¹⁵⁰ In a king-list, of course, the good king and the bad king, the successful and the unsuccessful reign had to be integrated exegetically into the overall scheme. That is the function of many of the comments in the *Demotic Chronicle*. The way that Manetho has subsumed the repeated narrative pattern of dissolution and restoration, as well as other comments about good and bad kings, under the overall structure of the king-list suggests that this same principle is at work in the *Aegyptiaca*. The narrative segments and other comments serve as the exegetical component of a king-list, elaborating the underlying principles of kingship through a metahistorical juxtaposition of multiple royal narratives gathered from Egyptian literature.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ The characteristics of the pervasive (but insufficiently studied) genre of the list and the intellectual activities that go into making lists, catalogs, and canons are explored by Smith 1982: 44–52 (see also Smith 1978: 70–71). The term originated with the study of Mesopotamian intellectual traditions and *Listenwissenschaft* is certainly prevalent in Sumerian and Akkadian literature (see von Soden 1936: *passim* and for a shorter overview, von Soden 1994: 145–72). Though originally thought to be an exclusive characteristic of these civilizations (von Soden 1936: 425), the concept of *Listenwissenschaft* was common in other cultures in the Near East, whether spread through transregional and transcultural interactions or independently developed (Alt 1951), and the notion has been usefully applied as a scholarly heuristic to other literary traditions (see e.g. Neusner 1990). Indeed, as Smith's examples show, the science of the list can be found almost everywhere, even in non-literate societies.

¹⁵⁰ Hornung 1966.

¹⁵¹ Manetho's creation of historical meaning in the interstices between texts (i.e. the narratives that he gathered from Egyptian literature) is similar to the implicit theorizing of historical writing that Michalowski 1999 has identified in the Mesopotamian tradition. Manetho has done some of this transtextual work for the reader by assembling the texts and organizing them according to the king-list structure. The theory, nevertheless, remains implicit. Manetho did even not use a narrative frame to link the various independent stories, as in, e.g., the magical stories told to King Khufu in the Westcar Papyrus, or the seventy good and bad stories gathered by Petese in the last days of his life (see Ryholt 1999: 69–70, 78–79). In Manetho's history, the king-list is the sole structuring principle.

There are, of course, important differences between a document such as the *Demotic Chronicle* and Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, and exploring these will help to understand Manetho's novel use of traditional forms. Most obvious of all is his choice of linguistic medium, but translating Egyptian into Greek was not the only way he made his own traditions comprehensible to Greeks. The terse interpretations of the oracles in the *Demotic Chronicle* often remain obscure and difficult to understand, since they presume a learned Egyptian reader of the priestly class. The statements and their interpretations are filled with complex, multivalent wordplay that would have required a familiarity with Egyptian language and the symbolic framework of Egyptian ritual and myth.¹⁵² Translated directly into Greek, many of these statements would remain almost incomprehensible to the new immigrant élites of Ptolemaic Egypt – translated directly into English and other languages, they have often seemed incomprehensible to modern scholars!¹⁵³ This perhaps explains Manetho's decision to flesh out and clarify the implicit meanings of his king-list with narratives, which are much more translatable than a highly self-referential set of symbols, but which are nevertheless capable of conveying the same principles of kingship ideology that could be expressed through the more compact symbolism and wordplay of the *Demotic Chronicle*.¹⁵⁴ In very general terms, the two different approaches to exegesis could be compared to two of the types of Bengkulu law codes I mentioned earlier in this chapter: the dense, learned versions written for those within a scholarly tradition, and the versions for outsiders written discursively and without complex metaphorical language.

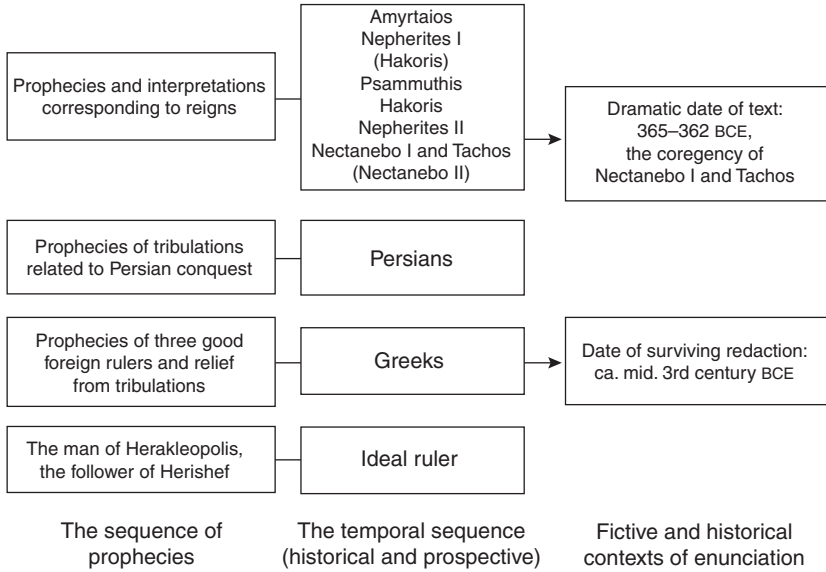
Another difference between the *Aegyptiaca* and the *Demotic Chronicle* is that Manetho's work was not apocalyptic.¹⁵⁵ The *Aegyptiaca* did not (as

¹⁵² On the use of wordplay and multivalent words in the *Demotic Chronicle*, see Johnson and Ritner 1990. An especially complex form of wordplay in which connections between words are made through an unexpressed middle term is further explored by Lippert 2001: esp. 94–100.

¹⁵³ Felber 2002: 70–71 describes the *Demotic Chronicle* as one of the most difficult Demotic texts to understand and translate, and notes the *bon mot* of Eduard Meyer (transmitted by Spiegelberg 1914: 5), who called it "einen sehr dunkel gehaltenen Kommentar zu noch dunkleren Prophezeiungen."

¹⁵⁴ Narrative, which has been described as "transcultural" and (unlike lyric poetry, e.g.) "translatable without fundamental damage" (Barthes 1977: 79, 121), appears to have been a privileged vehicle for interaction between Greeks and Egyptians, since it more easily crossed the barriers of language or generic expectations that separated the two literary communities. Scholars have long suggested connections between Egyptian narrative literature and the Greek novels (Barns 1956), and though some recent scholarship (e.g., Stephens and Winkler 1995: 11–18) has minimized this Egyptian contribution in the formation of the genre as a whole, other studies have verified the transmission of particular narrative motifs. See, e.g., Rutherford 1997, 2000 and the discussion of the Nectanebo legend below.

¹⁵⁵ At least not according to J. Z. Smith's well-known definition of apocalyptic as wisdom lacking a royal patron (1978: 67–87). Felber 2002: esp. 107–10 has argued that the *Demotic Chronicle* cannot

Fig. 1. Structure of the *Demotic Chronicle*.

far as can be known from the fragments) predict an ideal, paradigmatic, future king, who would come to rule Egypt, and put an end to its troubles. J. Z. Smith, however, has called Manetho's history "proto-apocalyptic" in its repeated use of mythical precedents and paradigms to pattern an account of the past.¹⁵⁶ The *Demotic Chronicle* does have a future orientation, but this is only part of a more complex temporal structure that is both historical and prospective (see Fig. 1). It includes *ex eventu* prophecies explained according to a series of kings in the past, but also predictions of a king oriented toward the future. The outline of kingship ideology in the *Demotic Chronicle* derives from both.

be considered apocalyptic either. He connects the three rulers after the Persians with the Greeks, and suggests that the man from Herakleopolis is to be identified with Ptolemy I. In Felber's opinion, therefore, the actual purpose of the text is to connect the Ptolemies with a (pseudo-)prophetic portrait of an ideal king. The reasons for making this connection (i.e. the unnamed three kings after the Persians; the general prosperity of the third century; and the mythical connections of the Ptolemies to Heracles and Dionysus (=Herishef and Osiris)) are suggestive, but in this text, one would expect an explicit reference in the explanatory comments. Unlike the exegesis of the earlier prophecies, no historical reference to a specific Ptolemy is made. I agree with Felber in seeing the *Demotic Chronicle* as generally positive in its outlook toward the Greeks, but the man of Herakleopolis belongs to an indeterminate moment in time, which has not been pinned down by the text's built-in exegesis.

¹⁵⁶ Smith 1978: 74.

There are some elements of the *Aegyptica*, however, that complicate the distinction just drawn. Although it does not appear to make predictions regarding the future, the *Aegyptiaca* does include prophetic elements. A prophecy probably lies behind a comment in Africanus’ epitome, under the 24th Dynasty king Bocchoris:

Τετάρτη καὶ εἰκοστὴ δυναστεία.

Βόχχορις Σαΐτης, ἔτη 5’, ἐφ’ οὗ ἄρνιον ἐφθέγγετο . . . ἔτη 30’.

The Twenty-fourth Dynasty.

Bochchoris of Saïs, for 6 years: in his reign a lamb spoke . . . 990 years.

It has long been recognized that this brief notice in Manetho relates to the *Prophecy of the Lamb*, a text preserved in a Demotic papyrus dated to 4 CE, in which a lamb predicts a period of suffering and turmoil for Egypt using an imagery of disorder that follows in a tradition of *ex eventu* prophecies like the Middle Kingdom *Prophecy of Neferti*. The latter text is a prophecy purporting to have been delivered to the 4th Dynasty pharaoh Snefru that “predicts” the restoration of order to Egypt in the reign of a king who resembles Amenemhat I, in whose reign the prophecy was actually composed. In the case of the *Prophecy of the Lamb*, however, the description of chaotic conditions (*Chaosbeschreibung*) seems to relate to the period contemporary with the text’s composition or final revision (probably in the later Ptolemaic period), and the coming of a good king who will restore Egypt’s well-being is deferred to the future – 900 years from the dramatic date of the prophecy and clearly beyond the period of its composition and immediate reception.¹⁵⁷ Given the truncated reference to the speaking lamb, it is impossible to know what form the story took in Manetho’s *Aegyptiaca*, but prophecy and its fulfillment are presented in greater detail in the Amenophis narrative. In this story, Amenophis, the son of Paapis, leaves a written prediction that certain allies would join the polluted men who had been driven out of Egypt and together they would seize control of the country for thirteen years. This does come to pass, but the king Amenophis is able to restore his rule over the kingdom after the stipulated period. These references suggest that the matching of historical

¹⁵⁷ On the *Prophecy of the Lamb*, see now Thissen 2002, who suggests that it was composed sometime after 130 BCE as an expansion of the account preserved in Manetho (on the date, see also Thissen 1998). For the categorization of this text as full-blown apocalyptic, see Smith 1978: 83–84, who also discusses the *Potter’s Oracle* as interpreted by Koenen 1968 and 1970 (see esp. pp. 252–53 of the latter for discussion of the *Prophecy of the Lamb* in connection with the *Oracle of the Potter*). On the *Potter’s Oracle*, see now Koenen and Blasius 2002. Ael. NA 12.3 also reports the Egyptian tradition of the talking lamb.

figures with *ex eventu* prophecies, what J. Z. Smith has called the “proto-apocalyptic situation,” and the way of explaining and representing history that this implies, were used in the narrative segments of the *Aegyptiaca*.¹⁵⁸

John Dillery has described the incorporation of the Amenophis story into the *Aegyptiaca* as the “historicization” of an earlier non-historical Egyptian narrative in the form of a “prophetic *Königsnovelle*.” Under the influence of Herodotean narrative, he argues, Manetho converted a future-oriented prophetic text into an account of events in historical time. Prophecy is clearly an important part of the Amenophis story, and there are Egyptian antecedents to the pattern, but the prophetic predecessor that Dillery reconstructs is hypothetical. As the *Demotic Chronicle* shows, moreover, the Egyptian literary use of *ex eventu* prophecy to explain historical events could certainly take a retrospective view and situate prophecy and its fulfillment in past time.¹⁵⁹ The Amenophis story and its prophetic elements, I would argue, reveal not “historicization” on the basis of Greek models, but an

¹⁵⁸ On the “proto-apocalyptic situation” see Smith 1978: 74–81 and also Smith 1982: esp. 90–96.

¹⁵⁹ Dillery 1999: 102–9. There is no real evidence of an antecedent that Manetho modified in producing his “historicized” version of the Amenophis tale, and so Dillery’s argument depends on Manetho’s departure from what he takes to be the normative generic conventions of the *Königsnovelle*, especially a variant known as the “prophetic *Königsnovelle*” (described by Koenen 1985: 188–94). It should be mentioned at the start that the definition of this genre is a matter of dispute (for references to the debate, see Ryholt 2002: 239 n. 31), and that some of the examples of *Königsnovellen* that Dillery (following Koenen) adduces in delineating the conventions of this form have been excluded from the genre by other scholars (e.g. the *Oracle of the Lamb*, by Thissen 2002: 127 and the *Dream of Nectanebo* by Ryholt 2002: 239). Critical to Dillery’s argument for historicization is the absence of a written prophecy in the Amenophis story, which he believes was originally there but transformed into the historical account of troubles that come after the king flees from Egypt. There is, of course, mention of a written prophecy composed by the seer, and this prophecy may have been fuller in Manetho’s original, since it occurs before Josephus begins his verbatim quotation of the *Aegyptiaca* (see the outline above). Dillery points to another apparent deviation from the *Königsnovelle*, in that “the prophecy is usually given to a king of the remote past” while in the Amenophis story, “the same king receives the prophecy, flees Egypt during its tribulations, and finally returns victoriously to restore order” (Dillery 1999: 104). In Manetho’s day, however, there was a well-attested Egyptian literary parallel for the first part of this narrative pattern: the *Dream of Nectanebo*, in which Nectanebo receives the prophecy of the troubles directly, and presumably flees Egypt (though the story breaks off before this point). Both the *Dream of Nectanebo* and the Amenophis story are prophetic, but they subvert the usual idealized portrait of the king’s actions in the traditional *Königsnovelle*, in order to show the consequences of royal misdeeds. Since both stories deal with the flawed actions of a king, their classification as a *Königsnovelle* is in fact doubtful (Ryholt 2002: 239). Their use of *ex eventu* prophecy is correspondingly different from its use in the original paradigm of the prophetic *Königsnovelle* (e.g., the *Prophecy of Nefertiti*): it is not used to make a king’s rule appear divinely sanctioned – quite the opposite. I shall pursue the connections between the Amenophis story and the Nectanebo legend below. The idea that Manetho’s historicization of *ex eventu* prophecy was modeled on Herodotus’ presumed historicization of a (hypothetical) Egyptian *ex eventu* prophecy in the stories of Anysis, Sabacos and Sethos (Hdt. 2.137–41) is equally problematic (Dillery 1999: 104–5). A hypothetical historicization as a model for another hypothetical historicization is not a convincing argument for Manetho’s dependence on the Greek historian.

Egyptian scholar's effort to use and to make comprehensible indigenous ways of explaining and representing the past in the process of grappling with the contemporary problem of historical rupture and continuity created by the end of native rule and the establishment of the Ptolemaic dynasty. There were also, I would argue, much more palpable literary and historical antecedents on which Manetho drew in shaping the Amenophis story.

Particularly suggestive of Manetho's historical use of the list – his practice of reading elements of a series forward and backward against one another – is the doubling of historical figures and peoples in the *Aegyptiaca*. In some cases, this involves not only the representation of the more recent past according to established precedents, but also the representation of events in the more distant past according to more recent events. In the Ptolemaic period, the recently overthrown Persians, like other invading enemies, were at times assimilated to the prototypical historical enemy, the Hyksos.¹⁶⁰ But the way in which Manetho laid out his hostile version of the Exodus suggests that recent experiences of Persian occupation shaped his representation of the events at the end of his 18th Dynasty. In that narrative segment, the internal enemies, the polluted, are not simply driven from Egypt; rather, they form an alliance with the external enemies, the descendants of the Hyksos (to be identified with the Persians),¹⁶¹ and they occupy Egypt for a certain period of time, stipulated by the prophecy of Amenophis son of Paapis. That time is thirteen years. This seems very brief for a period of "troubles" announced in a prophecy (the *Prophecy of*

¹⁶⁰ See the references in Yoyotte 1963: 140–41 on the "Rituel pour renverser Seth et ses associés," in which Seth is called "the Mede." Also note Alexander's pharaonic titlature, discussed above.

¹⁶¹ Schäfer 1997b: 121–35 has argued that this reference to an alliance may refer to Jewish soldiers serving in Persian garrisons in Egypt. A remarkable collection of Aramaic papyri from a military settlement at Elephantine has given insight into the life of Jewish soldiers serving as a garrison in Egypt under the first Persian Domination (525–404 BCE). In 410, tensions between the Egyptians and the Jewish settlement broke out into open conflict (for a brief discussion see Briant 2002: 603–7). While the Persian satrap Arsames was away, the priests of Khnum conspired with the local Persian commander Vidranga and destroyed the Jewish temple. There was a Jewish community in Egypt in Manetho's lifetime, and so it is possible that Egyptian–Jewish antagonisms existed. If so, they may have contributed to Manetho's identification of Osarseph with Moses. Ptolemy I is said to have incorporated Jews into the army after he took Jerusalem in 311 (Joseph. *AJ* 13.3–9; *Ap.* 1.208–11); some were made slaves, but later freed by Ptolemy II. There is papyrological evidence that Jews served in the Ptolemaic army in the third century BCE. For soldiers in the Ptolemaic army of the third century who are explicitly identified as Judaeans (Ιουδαῖοι), see *Pros. Ptol.* X E875 and E885 (La'da 2002: 106–7). There are also a number of other individuals with this ethnic designation who appear to have belonged to the milieu of military settlers in the Fayum: *Pros. Ptol.* X E890, E902, E906, E946, E949, E954, E956, E961, E963 (La'da 2002: 107–14). See also Tcherikover and Fuks 1957: 11–15, 147–78. For the second-century BCE Jewish *politeuma* at Herakleopolis, see now Cowey and Maresch 2001 and the review essay by Kasher 2002. A mid-second-century BCE anti-Jewish recension of the *Oracle of the Potter* attests to tensions between Egyptians and Jewish settlers at that period in Ptolemaic Egypt (see Koenen and Blasius 2002: 148, 162–63, 183–86).

the Lamb, as I mentioned, predicts 900 years of woes for Egypt). Long ago, Martin Braun made the intriguing suggestion that the thirteen years of oppressive foreign rule stipulated by the prophecy correspond to the Second Persian domination of Egypt, and that Manetho modeled several aspects of his Amenophis story on the fall of Nectanebo II, and the narrative traditions that developed around the last Egyptian pharaoh.¹⁶² In Manetho's narrative, the pharaoh Amenophis becomes, in some respects, a double of the last native pharaoh of Egypt. The treachery of the polluted Egyptians and their betrayal of Avaris to the Shepherds may, in part, parallel the betrayal of cities in the eastern Delta during the invasion of Artaxerxes III.¹⁶³ Amenophis initially leads his army out to meet the invaders from the northeast, but then retreats to Memphis, not unlike Nectanebo II, who, according to Diodorus Siculus, also withdrew to Memphis after the initial Persian attack.¹⁶⁴ Ultimately, Amenophis, like Nectanebo, fled to Ethiopia.¹⁶⁵ The subsequent destruction of cities and the desecration and plundering of the temples by the descendants of the Hyksos (the thirteen years of troubles) is parallel to the descriptions of the repressive measures undertaken by Artaxerxes III.¹⁶⁶

The prophetic reason for Amenophis' withdrawal to Memphis, his flight to Ethiopia, and his thirteen-year exile is also a significant point

¹⁶² Braun 1938: 19–22. See also Redford 1986a: 296; Burstein 1995: 45–47. There is a chronological problem in that the second Persian occupation lasted only about ten years according to modern chronological studies (from the conquest of Artaxerxes III in 342 until the conquest of Alexander in 332). On the other hand, the literary sources on the length of this period show considerable variation. According to Africanus' version of the Ps.-Manethonian 31st Dynasty, Artaxerxes III did not rule Egypt until 339/8, though this problem may be resolved by assuming that the elusive pharaoh Khababash came between Nectanebo II and Ochus in some traditions (Lloyd 1988b). On Khababash, see further Burstein 2000. It is also possible that in records of the early Ptolemaic period, the time from Nectanebo II to Alexander was inflated, perhaps by the inclusion of Khababash, who briefly overthrew Persian rule and established himself for at least two years. Though his years of rule would be contemporaneous with those of Arses and Darius III, they could have been counted sequentially.

¹⁶³ Braun 1938: 20. The major narrative source for this period is Diodorus Siculus. The standard modern treatment is still Kienitz 1953: 101–8. According to Diod. Sic. 16.49.7–16.50.6, a major factor in the success of Artaxerxes' invasion was the betrayal of cities in the Eastern Delta by the Egyptian and Greek troops stationed there. The first to go over to the Persians was Bubastis, which was about 20 miles from the ancient site of Avaris. An earlier act of betrayal was also critical to the invasion. In the course of a revolt against the Persians, the Phoenicians made an alliance with Nectanebo, and Tennes, king of Sidon, acquired from Egypt 4,000 Greek mercenaries under the command of Mentor of Rhodes. Tennes and Mentor, however, conspired to betray Sidon to the Persians. With the fall of Sidon, the other Phoenician cities capitulated, and the way was cleared to invade Egypt, during which campaign Mentor served as a general. See Diod. Sic. 16.41.1–3, 16.42.2, 16.43, 16.45.1–6. On the chronological problems with Diodorus, see Kienitz 1953: 181–84 and Lloyd 1994: 359.

¹⁶⁴ Diod. Sic. 16.48.6–7. ¹⁶⁵ Diod. Sic. 16.51.1.

¹⁶⁶ Diod. Sic. 16.51.2–3; see also the *Demotic Chronicle*, col. 4, ll.22–23 and Kienitz 1953: 107–8.

of comparison with the Egyptian narrative traditions surrounding Nectanebo II.¹⁶⁷ According to Manetho's account, Amenophis withdrew when he realized that he must not fight against the gods.¹⁶⁸ In the Nectanebo legend, which is now securely attested in both Greek and Demotic Egyptian versions, a dream oracle or an omen reveals to him that he has incurred the anger of the gods. The *Dream of Nectanebo*, preserved in a papyrus of the second century BCE, is a Greek translation from Demotic that gives part of a story in which Nectanebo sees a dream vision of the gods in a papyrus boat.¹⁶⁹ In this dream, the war-god Onuris complains to Isis of Nectanebo's neglect of his temple at Sebennyos.¹⁷⁰ Nectanebo hastens to make things right, but in what remains it appears that his efforts are in vain and he will be unable to avert divine wrath. A fragmentary Demotic text also refers to a dream of Nectanebo, and may be a version of the Demotic original on which the Greek translation was based.¹⁷¹ The Nectanebo story at the beginning of the *Alexander Romance* provides an even more direct parallel to Amenophis' refusal to fight with the gods. Upon hearing that foreign armies are massing in the east, Nectanebo performs a rite of lekanomancy, and he sees the gods of Egypt fighting on the side of his enemies. Realizing that he is up against the gods themselves, he decides that he must abandon Egypt.¹⁷² This Greek narrative of the Nectanebo legend has long been thought to originate in early Ptolemaic Egypt, and a recently published Demotic sequel to the *Dream of Nectanebo* provides an Egyptian story that could have served as the basis for the opening sequence of the *Alexander Romance*, or at the least told a similar story.¹⁷³ Though only the beginning survives, the story deals with the aftermath of

¹⁶⁷ For a full discussion of the sources, see Matthey forthcoming.

¹⁶⁸ Joseph. *Ap.* 1.246: ἀλλὰ μέλλειν θεομαχεῖν νομίσας παλινδρομήσας ἤκεν εἰς Μέμφιν; *Ap.* 1.263: τὸν βασιλέα δὲ τῶν Αἰγυπτίων Ἀμένωφιν οὐκ οἰόμενον δεῖν θεομαχεῖν εἰς τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν εὐθύς ἀποδρᾶναι . . .

¹⁶⁹ *UPZ* I 81. See Koenen 1985: 176–83 for a text with regularized spellings. For a more recent treatment, see Gauger 2002.

¹⁷⁰ There is a fascinating later parallel to the connection between the Amenophis story and the *Dream of Nectanebo* in a version of the Amenophis story recorded by the Egyptian priest and Stoic sage Chae remon (first century CE), which is also reported by Josephus (*Ap.* 1.288–92). In this version, the pharaoh Amenophis is disturbed by a dream in which he sees the goddess Isis reproaching him for the destruction of a temple during a war, and this leads him to seek the advice of a priest (Phritibantes), who counsels him to expel the polluted from Egypt. The presence of Isis in the dream, and the mention of a temple damaged in war perhaps recall the dream that Nectanebo has in which a complaint is made before Isis about the incomplete temple of the war-god Onuris. The text is Chae remon fr. 1 (Van der Horst 1984: 8–9, 49–51).

¹⁷¹ *P. Carlsb.* 562. Ryholt 1998: 2002: 223–25. ¹⁷² *Alexander Romance* 1.3.1–2 (ed. Kroll 1926).

¹⁷³ On the Egyptian origins of the Nectanebo legend at the beginning of the *Alexander Romance*, see Stoneman 1994: 122–23; Fraser 1996: 211–14; Jasnow 1997. On the sequel to the *Dream of Nectanebo* (*P. Carlsb.* 424, 499, 559), see Ryholt 2002: 228–37.

Nectanebo's failed attempt to appease the wrath of Onuris, and his actions in the face of inevitable foreign invasion.¹⁷⁴ The editor of this fragment has even suggested that the text may originally have contained a prophecy of the coming of Alexander the Great.¹⁷⁵

Seen in this light, Amenophis' return with his son to drive the foreigners from Egypt is perhaps an allusion to the popular tradition that Nectanebo was actually the father of Alexander. The prophecy in the *Alexander Romance* puts it in even more apt terms for the Amenophis story, predicting that Nectanebo would return to Egypt as a young man.¹⁷⁶ There may even have been some official version of this connection. As I noted earlier, Alexander's pharaonic titles refer to those of the last Egyptian king and at some point the sarcophagus of Nectanebo II was brought to Alexandria, the city founded by Alexander and the capital of the Ptolemies. The fictive connection between Nectanebo and Alexander, which bridges the rupture between the end of Egyptian rule and the beginning of Macedonian rule, would surely have been familiar to a priest from Sebennyptos like Manetho.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, the presence of actual unfinished inscriptions at the temple of Onuris-Shu at Sebennyptos suggests that priests from the capital of the last Egyptian dynasty may have referred to local monuments in creating at least one part of the legend of Nectanebo.¹⁷⁸ Josephus only briefly summarizes Manetho's account of Amenophis' return with his son Rampses and their expulsion of the foreigners, but this pair presumably reestablished order in Egypt, founded a new dynasty (the 19th in Manetho's reckoning), and restored the temples, images of the gods, and sacred animals. Amenophis and his son become a precedent for the history of Nectanebo and Alexander, and provide a means of reading the more recent past. Though Alexander came from the opposite direction (the north, rather than Ethiopia), the ideological message is clear enough: inasmuch as he drives out foreigners, and restores traditional Egyptian religion, the ruler, Egyptian or Macedonian, plays the role of a legitimate pharaoh. The Horus-name borrowed from Nectanebo and given to Alexander as part of his royal titlature was, as I mentioned earlier, *tkn-h3s.wt* "he who drives

¹⁷⁴ The biography of Somtutefnakht, who lived from the late 30th Dynasty to the early Macedonian period, implies that the defeat of Nectanebo was the result of divine hostility, since he describes the invasion of the Persians in terms of the god Herishef-Ra turning his back on Egypt. Lloyd 1983: 299; Perdu 1985: 103, 105 note g.

¹⁷⁵ Ryholt 2002: 234–37. ¹⁷⁶ 1.3.5 (ed. Kroll 1926).

¹⁷⁷ See the discussion of Manetho's origins in Sebennyptos above.

¹⁷⁸ Ryholt 2002: 240–41 has suggested that the unfinished inscriptions at the temple of Onuris-Shu at Sebennyptos served as an inspiration to Sebennytte priests composing the *Dream of Nectanebo*. See also Spencer 1999: 76–78.

out foreigners." Though not prophetic, the precedent of Amenophis and his son, along with its historical complement in Nectanebo and Alexander, do suggest that Manetho's work had a future orientation.

This brings us to the ending of the *Aegyptiaca*. We cannot know if Manetho's history ended in the prophecy of a future king. But it is certain that it had an ending, unlike Hayden White's incomplete chronicle. The epitomes were in danger of transforming it into a chronicle by adding a 31st Dynasty (the second Persian occupation), and who knows where that would have stopped, but various testimonia show that Manetho himself did indeed end with the reign of Nectanebo II and the invasion of Artaxerxes III.¹⁷⁹ The thirty dynasties of the *Aegyptiaca*, moreover, give an air of completion and canonical closure. Thirty is the number of days in an Egyptian month, and the number of years of rule celebrated at a pharaoh's *hḥ-sd* (jubilee festival). The number thirty was associated with Maat and judgment, and it is also the number of chapters in the *Teachings of Amenemope*, a canonical wisdom text.¹⁸⁰ Manetho closed his "canon" of thirty dynasties with the Persian invasion, but in choosing this conclusion, Manetho chose an end that is curiously incomplete – not according to White's definition of chronicle, but according to the pattern established by his narrative segments.¹⁸¹ There is dissolution, but no restoration. Instead, the *Aegyptiaca* left a temporal gap across which Manetho's readers – Greeks in general, but the first Ptolemies in particular – would read Egyptian history. And through its king-list structure, its concern to communicate the principles of legitimate kingship, and its invitation to read forward and backward in time through the lens of traditional paradigms of pharaonic action, they would perhaps also learn to read Egyptian history in an Egyptian fashion. The

¹⁷⁹ See the discussion of the surviving fragments in the section above entitled "Manetho in Context(s)."

¹⁸⁰ The classic wisdom text attributed to Amenemope was composed in the Rameside period but survives in its most complete form in a manuscript of the 26th Dynasty (British Museum EA 10474; on the dating, see Verhoeven 2001: 290–302). It is widely accepted that the author of the Proverbs was familiar with the "30 chapters" of Amenemope, and seems to have regarded this number as part of the genre. See Proverbs 22:20–21: "Have I not written for you thirty chapters of advice and knowledge, for you to be able to expound the truth and with sound words answer those who question you?" See Lichtheim 1976: 146–63, and Grumach-Shirun 1980 for further references. A Roman-period bilingual (Greek and Demotic) school text on an ostrakon from Medinet Madi also mentions "thirty precepts" (*O.Medin.Madi* I 27 (= Bresciani, Pernigotti, and Betrò 1983: 35–39), adopting the reedition of Hoffmann 2000: 45–46, pl. 9). The number thirty's connotations of justice and judgment come from the "Council of Thirty" (*m'ḥy.t*) that was the traditional grand jury of Egypt (see e.g. *Admonitions of Ipuwer* (*P.Leiden* 344 6, 10)). Even the Ennead of gods judging Horus and Seth was referred to as the Thirty in *P.Chester Beatty* I recto 3, 9. For references to this tribunal of thirty in the Ptolemaic hieroglyphic texts at Edfu see Wilson 1997: 414–15. There is a probable reference to this tribunal in Diod. Sic. 1.75.3–7.

¹⁸¹ This brief rumination on the "closure" of Manetho's canon of dynasties was provoked by J. Z. Smith's reflection on the canon as a closed list (Smith 1982: 36–52).

judgment of Alexander and his successors, however, was left hanging in the balance.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, I shall summarize my arguments in the terms from which I set out. Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* does not appear to be formally dependent on Greek historiography in any clear way, certainly not in its king-list structure or in the chronological use to which the king-list was put. Though Manetho appears to have included synchronisms with Greek tradition, he does not adapt the chronology or structure of his Egyptian history to Greek precedents. Indeed, by pinning down figures that drift unanchored in the most remote parts of Greek antiquity, Manetho exposed the gaps in Greek genealogical chronologies and filled them in, defining the Egyptian king-list as the scale of absolute chronology. The Heraclid period, the chronological frame within which Herodotus assembled a continuous narrative of Egyptian history from Sesostris forward, did not intrude on Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*. For the most part, the intertextual relationship between the *Histories* and the *Aegyptiaca* consists of Manetho disassembling Herodotus' narrative history, and, where there is common content, redistributing it according to his own chronology. But Manetho did not replace one narrative with another – at least not the complete, continuous narrative assumed by many scholars, who follow a Western scheme of historiographical progress. His innovation was to combine a lengthy king-list with narrative segments in order to explain the meaning of the Egyptian past. This is precisely the content of the form that Hayden White sees as lacking in annalistic writing and crucial to narrative history: historical representation by a subjectivity who is conscious of a particular sociopolitical order, and, in accordance with that order, organizes events and charges them with ethical or moral significance. The *Aegyptiaca* also differ from White's chronicle: they end in the past, but they end in a way that suspends rather than forms judgment. These observations are not – in intention at least – an argument against Hayden White, but rather against endowing Manetho's historiography with significance by writing it into the narrative of Droysen's *Hellenismus*, a narrative with the insidious content of Hegelian world-history.

This argument casts a different light on Manetho's position in relation to Hellenism and the Ptolemaic court, and on the generative moment in interaction between Greek and Egyptian civilization from which the *Aegyptiaca* emerged. Manetho's work was not the result of a Greek colonization

of Egyptian historical consciousness. It was an indigenous attempt both to make explicit the proper historical role of the Egyptian pharaoh, and also to teach the Ptolemies and other Greeks at court to read Egyptian history in an Egyptian fashion. In this sense, Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* belongs not to a stemma of Greek histories and historians, but to the discursive context that also produced the Canopus Decree, the Rosetta Stone, and other trilingual monuments. These famous inscriptions recorded acts of communication between the Ptolemaic dynasty and the indigenous Egyptian élite. Through honorific decrees composed in Greek (but translated into Egyptian), the priests of Egypt praised those moments and actions in which the Ptolemies conformed to ideal types of pharaonic kingship. In these texts, the Ptolemies have piously conferred benefactions on temples and sacred animals, repatriated images of the gods taken by the Persians, and cared for the people of Egypt in periods of crisis. At times the decrees explicitly compare such actions to mythical and historical precedents.¹⁸² Elsewhere in the surviving evidence of the discourse between Ptolemies and priests, the link between past and present is even more precise. In royal titles and portraiture, as I noted at the beginning of this chapter, the first Ptolemies assumed the role of successors to the Sebennytte dynasty. As successors, they took on Nectanebid names, and fostered the cult of Nectanebo II. They also completed temple construction at Sebennytos and elsewhere that had been left unfinished by the last native king, symbolically restoring order after the rupture of Persian domination.¹⁸³ In light of these and other efforts by the Ptolemies to harmonize their self-representations and royal actions with paradigms and precedents from the pharaonic past, Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* takes on a new historical significance: it becomes part of a successful Egyptian attempt to educate the Ptolemaic court in the meaning of Egyptian history.

¹⁸² See, for example, the praise of Ptolemy III Euergetes' provision of grain in time of drought in the Canopus Decree (*OGIS* 56A, ll. 13–18): "all those in the country were terrified at this happening and were thinking upon the destruction that had taken place under some of the former kings, in whose reign those dwelling in the country met with droughts . . . exercising provident care . . . [Ptolemy and Berenike] saved the inhabitants of Egypt" (translation Bagnall and Derow 2004: 265). In the Rosetta Stone, the recapture of Lykopolis is assimilated to divine precedents (*OGIS* 90A, ll. 26–27): "in a short time, he took the city by storm and destroyed all the impious men in it, just as [Herm]es and Horus (son) of Isis and Osiris subdued the former rebels in the same regions" (translation Bagnall and Derow 2004: 269). On the language of composition and the form of the decrees, see Clarysse 2000.

¹⁸³ See Spencer 1999: esp. 76–78; Arnold 1999: 137–41; Hölbl 2001: 86–87.

*The Delian Sarapis aretology and the politics
of syncretism*

From 1909 to 1912, French archaeologists led by Pierre Roussel carried out the first systematic excavation of structures in the neighborhood of the Inopos valley on the island of Delos. This was an area in which inscriptions related to the cult of Egyptian gods had been discovered as early as the seventeenth century, but with the exception of some incomplete digs in the nineteenth century, the exploration of a possible sanctuary dedicated to Egyptian divinities had taken a back seat to scholarly interest in the cult of Apollo.¹ By the end of his excavations, however, Roussel had unearthed the third of three sanctuaries (A, B, and C) devoted to the god Sarapis.² Roussel designated the last one of these that he found not Sarapieion C (as one might suppose from the order of their discovery), but Sarapieion A. He found the reason for this sequence in a lengthy Greek inscription that he uncovered there in 1912.³

In prose and hexameters, this text, dated roughly to the end of the third century BCE, tells of the sanctuary's foundation: a tale of humble beginnings, a struggle for survival, and ultimate success through the intervention of Sarapis. The most prominent event in this brief history is the victory of the Egyptian priest Apollonios over certain men who brought a lawsuit against him and the newly built sanctuary. This victory is attributed to

¹ Roussel 1915–16: 9–12 gives a brief survey of the surface discoveries and excavations on Delos prior to his excavations. Several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travel accounts mention inscriptions in honor of Egyptian divinities, but in the absence of any literary evidence, the authors assumed that these clues represented at most an altar in the sanctuary of Apollo, and the presence of a temple of the Egyptian gods was not recognized until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Preliminary excavations were only undertaken by Stamatakis in 1873–74 and Hauvette in 1881. Roussel (1915–16: 11–12) notes the latter's lack of enthusiasm for monuments belonging "to a less interesting period of Delian history than the temple of Apollo."

² What Roussel later designated *Sarapieion C* was excavated already by Hauvette in 1883, though the latter identified it as a sanctuary of foreign gods, and not specifically a Sarapieion. See Rusch (1906): 40. *Sarapieion B* was uncovered after completing the excavations begun by Hauvette, and *Sarapieion A* was discovered in 1911 and fully excavated in 1912. See Roussel 1915–16: 12–13.

³ IG XI.4 1299 (= *RICIS* 202/0101).

the saving power of Sarapis, who along with his consort Isis, paralyzed Apollonios' accusers at the trial, rendering them speechless and unable to argue their case. As the inscription tells it, the people of Delos marveled at this demonstration of the god's miraculous power (his ἀρετή). Accordingly, Roussel identified this text as an aretalogy, but he also placed great value on the document as evidence for the early history of what was to become the very wealthy and successful cult of Egyptian gods on Delos. Largely on the basis of this inscription, Roussel interpreted Sarapieion A as the original sanctuary of the Egyptian gods,⁴ and Apollonios' legal victory over "conservative religious elements" on Delos as a turning point in the history of the Egyptian cult. The renown that the Egyptian gods achieved thanks to their intervention at the trial, Roussel suggested, led to rapid expansion of their cult, manifested in the two other Sarapieia (B and C), and eventually in official acceptance when ca. 190–180 BCE the largest (C) came under the purview of the Delian *hieropoioi* and a Delian *neokoros* was appointed to attend to the buildings. In its broad outlines, most scholars since have followed Roussel's (A–B–C) account.⁵

With the publication of Roussel's work, the Delian Sarapis aretalogy achieved wider importance in scholarship on Hellenistic religions, and has become a fundamental text in the history of "Oriental cults" in the Hellenistic period.⁶ The epigraphical and archaeological materials on Delos still provide the richest documentation relating to the introduction of Egyptian cults into the Greek world, and with its central role in the interpretation of this material, the inscription erected by the priest Apollonios has acquired an exemplary value. This value has two interrelated dimensions. First, as a text assigned to the genre of aretalogy, the inscription has a particular meaning in the conventional phenomenology of Hellenistic religion: it is understood as a miracle story and hymn of praise used in a

⁴ Roussel 1915–16: 250–52. Note especially 252: "Si j'ai correctement interprété ce document, il enregistre le triomphe définitif de Sarapis et marque un moment décisif dans l'histoire de son culte à Délos. Désormais ce culte se développera avec vigueur et la reconnaissance officielle ne fera qu'en confirmer le succès."

⁵ Nock 1933a: 50–55 makes the quasi-evangelical narrative most explicit. Cf. also Nock 1933b: 184–85. Later authors are less concerned with the "miracle story," but nevertheless follow the outlines of Roussel's history: Bruneau 1970: 465–66 and 1973: 130 assumes the priority of Sarapieion A; Dunand 1973: 2.83–115 does not discuss the aretalogical aspects of the text, but nevertheless follows Roussel's sequence of sanctuaries (see esp. 85–89, and the chronological table on 99), though she has reservations about the extent of officialization under the Delians (see 95–96); Engelmann 1975: 13–14 also assumes Roussel's chronology in tracing the descendants of Apollonios; see also Świderek 1975: 671–72; Tran 1982: 102; Le Guen-Pollet 1991: 221–22.

⁶ Nock 1933a: 50–56, to cite an early example, devoted considerable attention to this text in his account of the spread of Oriental religions to the Greek world.

propagandistic way to proclaim the powers of the god and win adherents in the marketplace of Hellenistic religions.⁷ Perhaps more important, however, is the cultural position this inscription occupies, along with the cult and divinities it eulogizes. For the history of Hellenistic religions, the cult of Sarapis is in many respects the syncretism par excellence, and the story of the cult on Delos has been interpreted in the context of debates over the cultural form in which “Egyptian” or “Graeco-Egyptian” religion was received in the Greek world. In such interpretations, however, uncritical models of syncretism, or (alternatively) essentializing definitions of cultural identity, have obscured the sometimes surprising ways in which the actors in this drama have themselves used discourses of identity in their political and religious struggles. In what follows, I propose to retell the story of the Sarapis cult on Delos while remaining sensitive to these discourses. First, I shall briefly explore the problematic notion of syncretism, especially as it relates to Sarapis, and then I shall reexamine the aretalogical inscription and the way it represents the meaning of Sarapis’ miraculous intervention through both the Greek form of the text and its appeals to Egyptian tradition. Finally, I shall resituate the text in the local history of the cult on Delos.

SARAPIS AND SYNCRETISM

In retelling the local history of the Sarapis cult on Delos, it is necessary to begin with the background: the well-known account of the arrival of the Sarapis statue in Alexandria recorded in Tacitus and Plutarch.⁸ For histories and interpretations of the Hellenistic Sarapis cult, this has long been an influential narrative, since it recounts the apparent introduction of a new cult formed from mixed cultural and religious elements under the direction of the early Ptolemaic court. The story has, therefore, been regarded as evidence for understanding Sarapis as a conscious and deliberate

⁷ See Nock 1933a: 53, 83–98, who famously remarked that “miracle proved deity” (91). Cf. also Nock’s insistence on concrete details of divine intervention as the *sine qua non* of aretalogy (Nock 1958: 340–41). Longo 1969 favored limiting the term aretalogy to explicit accounts of specific miracles (adopting a technical sense for the term ἀρετή), and excluding compositions enumerating the virtues of a god in a more general sense. This position has not been widely accepted (Grandjean 1975: 1–8). All the same, Longo 1969: 29–30 certainly understood the aretalogy as propagandistic in function. See also M. Smith 1971: 174–76, and J. Z. Smith 1978: 190–207, though these two scholars focus on accounts of the divine man in exploring the relationship between aretalogy and gospel.

⁸ The longest account is Tac. *Hist.* 4.83–84, though Plut. *Mor.* 361f–362a (*De Is. et Os.* 28) also gives the main outline, and includes another miraculous episode from the story in *Mor.* 984a–b (*Terrestriane an aquatilia animalia sint callidiora*, 36). See also Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.42–43 and Cyril *Adv. Iul.* (Migne, PG LXXVI.1, 521).

syncretism created in the political and cultural conditions typical of the Hellenistic period: a fusion of cultures determined by the political demands of Graeco-Macedonian rule over a non-Greek civilization.

There are differences between the two primary versions, but in brief, the tale goes as follows: Ptolemy I Soter had a dream, in which a vision appeared – of either a young man or a colossal statue – which instructed him to bring his statue from Pontus. After consulting dream interpreters and travelers, the king learned of a statue of Pluto in Sinope that fitted the description. At first Ptolemy put off taking action, but when the dream returned and became more insistent and threatening, he dispatched ambassadors, first to Delphi, where they received further instructions, and then to the Scythian king Scydrothemis, who ruled over Sinope at the time. Scydrothemis also tried to temporize, but after he had threatening dreams of his own, he agreed to Ptolemy's request. After many difficulties, and not without divine intervention, the ambassadors eventually brought the statue to Alexandria. In Plutarch's version, the identity of the god was discussed by a joint Greek–Egyptian council headed by the Athenian Timotheos, an exegete of the Eleusinian Eumolpid clan, and Manetho, the priest and historian whose work I discussed in the previous chapter. They agreed that the statue was an image of Pluto, and that it represented no other god than Sarapis. Tacitus relates that a large new temple was built for the image in the Rhakotis quarter of Alexandria on the spot of an ancient shrine dedicated to Sarapis and Isis.⁹

For Droysen, certainly, this Alexandrian foundation of the Sarapis cult was an epoch-making event, a critical moment that marked the development through *Hellenismus* of a religious universalism which was to supplant the bounded, national religions of archaic paganism. Sarapis has a prominent place in Droysen's description of this religious transformation:

And thus Alexander can worship the gods of the Egyptians and Babylonians with the same propriety as his native ones, and in the god of the Jews honor the same supreme power that Aristotle recognized as the eternal, creative Reason; thus can the Hades of Sinope be taken to Alexandria and there receive temple and worship as Sarapis; thus is theocracy given free reign, and the religions of the entire world,

⁹ Among the major differences: in Plutarch, the king's dream is of the Sinope statue itself, while in Tacitus the young man appears; in Tacitus, Egyptian priests cannot interpret this dream, but the Athenian Timotheos can; Plutarch says little about the dream interpretation, instead having Timotheos, along with Manetho, interpret the identity of the statue; Plutarch abbreviates the story of the embassy to Sinope, though he includes an episode from that narrative in *Mor.* 984a–b. Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.42 refers to a version of the story with some similar elements, though it is set in the reign of Philadelphus. The best recent treatment of these accounts is that of Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000, to which I shall refer further below.

each once for its race or land the direct and most local expression, appear now as refractions of a higher unity, under which concept they are subsumed; no longer do they divide the peoples, but rather, through the superior insight that the Greek spirit achieves, they unite them.¹⁰

This unification of peoples in a common humanity through the mingling of gods and religions is, of course, progress toward Christendom, the *telos* of Droysen's historiographical scheme,¹¹ but in the more specific context of the Ptolemaic kingdom, Droysen saw Sarapis as the pinnacle of early efforts to "cancel out" (*aufheben* – an Hegelian usage) the separation between Greeks and Egyptians, and to draw Egyptians into the interests of Hellenism.¹² The Sarapis cult, in this view, was a conscious political creation aimed at joining the Greek and Egyptian parts of the population. What exactly, in terms of cultural and religious elements, was brought together in the figure of Sarapis is left rather less clear in Droysen's universalistic syncretism or *Theokrasie*. He mentions Sarapis' identification with Osiris, but describes him as a Greek god, paired in a marriage of civilizations with the Egyptian Isis. Then again, he also suggests Babylonian and Syrian equivalents for Sarapis. Leaving this diversity of origins behind, Droysen goes on to extol the religious-historical role of Sarapis as a "universal human god," who took on the terrors of death that afflict all humanity, and whose cult had a transforming influence within Egypt and beyond its borders.¹³ But these brief reflections were left (notoriously) unexplored, and Droysen returned to his main argument: the political significance of this religious development as a continuation of Alexander's great plan of *Verschmelzung*.¹⁴

¹⁰ Droysen 1877–78: 3.23: "Da kann Alexander die Götter Aegyptens und Babyloniens mit gleichem Recht anbeten wie die heimatlichen, und in dem Gott der Juden dieselbe höchste Macht verehren, die Aristoteles als die ewige, schaffende Vernunft erkannt hat; da kann der Hades von Sinope nach Alexandrien geführt werden und dort als Sarapis Tempel und Dienst erhalten; da ist der Theokrasie freier Raum gegeben, und die Religionen der Ganzen Welt, jede einst ihrem Stamm, ihrem Lande der unmittelbare und localste Ausdruck, erscheinen nun als Lichtbrechungen einer höheren Einheit, sie werden unter dieser begriffen; sie scheiden nicht mehr die Völker, sondern unter der höheren Einsicht, die das Griechenthum erarbeitet, vereinen sie sie." Curiously, the important French translation by Bouché-Leclercq (Droysen 1883–85: 3.23) substitutes "le Dieu des Hindous" for "der Gott der Juden" in this passage, significantly changing the character of this set of examples.

¹¹ Droysen 1877–78: 3.7 expresses the religious dimension of this teleology most explicitly: "Wie weit entfernt sind diese Anfänge [i.e. the particularistic, natural state of the archaic pagan religions] von der Vorstellung der Einen Menschheit, die alle Völker umfaßt, des Einen Reiches, das nicht von dieser Welt ist, – jener Vorstellung, die ihren vollendenden Ausdruck in der Erscheinung des Heilandes gewinnt. Das ist der Punkt, zu dem hin die Entwicklung der alten, der heidnischen Welt strebt, von dem aus ihre Geschichte begriffen werden muß."

¹² Droysen 1877–78: 3.46–47.

¹³ Droysen 1877–78: 3.47–49.

¹⁴ "Das Weitere dieser religiösen Umbildungen bleibt einer späteren Darstellung vorbehalten; hier war nur auf ihre politische Bedeutsamkeit aufmerksam zu machen" (Droysen 1877–78: 3.49).

Scholarship after Droysen, of course, pursued the central cultural and political questions outlined in his brief sketch, and changed considerably the picture of the Sarapis cult as a syncretistic phenomenon. Perhaps the most important advance in understanding the cultural background of the “new” god was Ulrich Wilcken’s conclusive demonstration that whatever the traditional foundation narrative says about the Sarapis cult, the origins of the name Sarapis, and of the god himself, lay in the Memphite *Wsir-Ḥp* (Osiris-Apis), the deceased, divinized Apis bull identified as Osiris.¹⁵ Greek authors were aware of this connection from at least the late fourth century BCE, and Egyptologists since Champollion had also compared the Egyptian *Wsir-Ḥp* with the Greek Sarapis.¹⁶ Wilcken, however, working with papyri from the Memphite Sarapieion, showed that this connection was current there among resident Greeks (and Egyptians) in the period contemporary to the emergence of the Hellenistic Sarapis cult, and even somewhat earlier. A papyrus containing the famous “Curse of Artemisia” showed that as early as the mid-fourth century BCE Hellenomemphites addressed their supplications to “Oserapis,” a Greek transcription of *Wsir-Ḥp* which was the antecedent to the name Sarapis.¹⁷ Other discoveries have confirmed that this connection was not limited to the domain of *Wsir-Ḥp* at Saqqara, but also known at the Alexandrian Sarapieion.¹⁸

¹⁵ Wilcken 1927: 77–78. For later discussions, see Stambaugh 1972: 60–65; Thompson 1988: 190–206; and Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 57, 61–75.

¹⁶ Nymphodorus of Syracuse derived the name Sarapis from Σορός Ἀπιδος “coffin of Apis” (in Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.21.106; cf. Plut. *Mor.* 362c). Phylarchus in the third century BCE connected Sarapis with two bulls, Apis and Osiris, brought by Dionysus from India (in Plut. *Mor.* 362b–c). Athenodorus of Tarsus (first century BCE) in describing the image of Sarapis, derived the name Sarapis from Oserapis, a combination of Osiris and Apis (in Clem. Al. *Protr.* 4.48): σύνθετον ἀπὸ τε Ὀσιρίδου καὶ Ἀπιδος γενόμενον Ὀσίραπτις. Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 29 (*Mor.* 362b–e) discusses a number of origins of the name Sarapis, some fanciful, some relatively accurate. On the Egyptological discussion of this issue prior to Wilcken’s definitive UPZ publication, see Otto 1905–08: 1.12–13, 2.215 n. 1.

¹⁷ UPZ I 1; Wilcken 1927: 97–104; the text was included in the corpus of magical papyri as PGM XL (Preisendanz and Henrichs 1973–74), and in the volume of translations edited by Betz 1992, but the German and English translations in these works are problematic. See Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 68–69, n. 147. Note also that the date given in Betz 1992: xxiv is incorrect. Since the significance of the “Curse of Artemisia” was recognized, some further evidence has shed light on the devotion to the cult of the Apis bull among Greeks resident in Egypt before the Ptolemaic period. A small fifth-century BCE bronze figure of an Apis bull originating in the Delta and now in the British Museum bears the dedicatory inscription “Sokydes dedicated me to Panepi” (τῷ Πανεπί μ’ ἀνέσταςε Σωφύδης). The name Panepi refers to the Apis bull. See Masson 1977: 61–63. A painted panel from Saqqara shows a procession scene related to the Apis cult, but painted in a Greek style that has been dated to the second half of the fifth century BCE. See Martin et al. 1979: 74–78.

¹⁸ Already in 1886, Maspéro had published a third-century BCE gold plaque from Alexandria dedicating a temple on which the Greek name Sarapis translated the hieroglyphic *Wsir-Ḥp*. Otto 1905–08: 1.13 n. 2. Excavations at the acropolis of Alexandria from 1943 to 1945 turned up a bilingual foundation plaque for the Sarapieion dated to the reign of Ptolemy III (Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria,

The picture Droysen and others had proposed of Sarapis as a universal confection drawn from varied origins thus gave way very early to a Graeco-Egyptian Sarapis, but the implied relationship between the two parts of this more restricted cultural combination has continued to be influenced by the political narrative of *Hellenismus*. In the case of Sarapis, syncretism came to mean Hellenization in the interests of the Ptolemaic kingdom. Initially, Droysen's understanding of the Sarapis cult as part of a deliberate Ptolemaic religious policy designed to secure the unification of Greeks and Egyptians held sway,¹⁹ but the findings of later research have suggested a less decisive role for the king in the creation and promotion of the cult. In the first place, the fact that *Wsir-Ḥp* had a following among the Hellenomemphites well before the reign of Ptolemy Soter suggests that Soter did not so much "create" Sarapis or his cult, but rather provided it with royal patronage in response to the god's pre-existing popularity among Greeks in Egypt.²⁰ The aims and results of this patronage have also been much discussed. If indeed the political function of the new version of the Sarapis cult was to join Greeks and Egyptians in a common religious bond, the evidence, as many scholars have pointed out, shows at best only half success, since during the Ptolemaic period the Greek name and Greek iconography of Sarapis occur primarily in the Greek milieu, and made little impact in the Egyptian.²¹ This is not surprising, of course, given the continued observance of the traditional Sarapis (*Wsir-Ḥp*) cult at Memphis.²² Likewise, the idea that the Ptolemaic court propagated the Sarapis cult in the Greek world outside Egypt as part of an imperialistic

Inv. P 8357; for further bibliography, see Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 56 n. 82). The Greek portion indicated that Ptolemy III dedicated the temple and enclosure to Sarapis, while a hieroglyphic text following the king's cartouche read: *ir.n.f pr hn^c hw.t n Wsir-Ḥp* "He made the temple and the estate of Osiris-Apis." A Demotic text from the archive of Ḥor refers to the Sarapieion at Alexandria as *pr Wsir-Ḥp pš ʕ nty n R^c-kdt* "the house of Osiris-Apis the great, who is in Rakotis." See Ray 1976: 22, 26, text no. 3 verso 19–20.

¹⁹ Otto 1905–08: 1.11–16 was among those who argued quite early for the Egyptian origins of Sarapis, but he still viewed the "Hellenized" form of the cult in the political terms laid out by Droysen. See especially Otto 1905–08: 2.264–69. Brady 1935: 16 assumes this argument, though he tellingly separates religious fusion from "racial" miscegenation.

²⁰ See Stambaugh 1972: 8–12 who also discusses several later sources (Plut. *Alex.* 76; Arr. *Anab.* 7.26.2; Ps.-Callisthenes I.30–33) which refer to Sarapis at dates prior to the supposed foundation of the cult. Though Fraser 1960: 46 doubted its authenticity, Stambaugh 1972: 82 argued in favor of the oracle that Nicocreon received from Sarapis (Macrob. *Sat.* 1.20), which must have a date before 310 BCE. More recently, Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 56 have also accepted the testimony as early evidence of Sarapis.

²¹ Though his "statistical" approach is rather crude, see Fraser 1960: 5–20; cf. Stambaugh 1972: 94–96. Further evidence is also surveyed briefly in Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 60.

²² See Thompson 1988: 190–206, 273–75.

religious policy has found little confirming evidence.²³ In the end, more recent theories of the political motivation behind the Sarapis cult have in some respects stood Droysen's original formulation on its head. Rather than a cult that canceled out divisions between Greeks and Egyptians within Egypt – i.e., a religious phenomenon whose universal appeal superceded fixed and bounded “national” religions – the Hellenistic cult of Sarapis and its Ptolemaic patronage have come to be seen as a religious policy directed specifically toward Greeks in an effort to tie a diverse array of immigrants more closely to the kingdom of Egypt and the Ptolemaic dynasty.²⁴

Despite rejection of the theory that Sarapis played a significant role in a Hellenistic *Verschmelzung* of Greek and Egyptian cultures, and indeed a more general rejection of theories of mixture or fusion, the cultural dimension of Droysen's *Hellenismus* has remained its most powerful and persistent legacy. Droysen, of course, did not formulate Hellenistic civilization as a meeting of East and West on equal terms; Greek culture was always on top – the active partner that “Hellenized” the East, shaping the cultural matter of the Orient. So even if the narrative of Sarapis' introduction at Alexandria no longer represents the “invention” of a new god, or a significant moment in political fusion, scholars have still frequently understood it as a foundational moment in the Hellenization of an Egyptian god, a moment that allowed the Greek world to take over the cult of Sarapis. This view was outlined quite early and succinctly by A. D. Nock:

For the subsequent expansion of cults from the Near East in Greece and the West no worships are of great importance except those which were substantially translated into Greek and remade with Greek elements into cults which retained their Oriental flavour but were divorced from their original cultural and religious setting.

The chief of these is the cult of Sarapis. . . . The name Sarapis indicates that the god is a hellenized form of Osorapis of Memphis. . . . Ptolemy I with the Egyptian priest Manetho and the Eleusinian exegete Timotheus as advisers made from this the cult of Sarapis in Greek form at Alexandria . . .²⁵

²³ E.g. Rusch 1906: 78 and Brady 1935: 18–23 argued for Ptolemaic influence in spreading the cult of Sarapis in the Aegean. An early argument against this view was, in fact, Roussel's publication of the material from Delos (1915–16: 239–40) and Fraser 1960: 20–49 made the case against the “imperialistic theory” much more forcefully. Fraser also gives an overview of the prior scholarship on this issue (1960: 20–22).

²⁴ E.g. Fraser 1960: 18–19; Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 76. Koenen 1993: 44 also alludes briefly to this.

²⁵ Nock 1933a: 37–38. Though the latter's opinion of the political motivations and results differs, this assessment is not very different from Otto 1905–08: 1.14–16, 2.214–15, 267–79. Brady 1935: 10 is of the same opinion as Nock: “One may suppose, then, that the change in name of the deity as well

Important articles published by P. M. Fraser in the 1960s reasserted Ptolemy's foundation of the Sarapis cult as a thoroughly Hellenized phenomenon,²⁶ and more recently, this idea has also been championed by scholars favoring a view of separate coexisting cultures in Ptolemaic Egypt.²⁷ A Hellenized Sarapis, after all, provides a buffer separating the Greeks from Egyptian influence, thus maintaining the cultural purity of Hellenism, and also allowing the separate vitality of Egyptian traditions surrounding *Wsir-Ḥp*. For some scholars this notion of separatism (it could even be called a theoretical *apartheid*) has prevailed over syncretism: Greek cult for Greeks and Egyptian for Egyptians.²⁸

Others, however, have argued that interpreting the origins of the Graeco-Egyptian cult of Sarapis demands a more complex articulation of the cultural interactions and discourses contributing to the total phenomenon. Among several important efforts in this direction²⁹ is an article by Philippe Borgeaud and Yuri Volokhine, who have reexamined the origin narrative itself, and argued that, despite tenacious scholarly views, it represents

as the change in his character which made him a Hellenic god, coincided with the founding of the cult at Alexandria . . . the work of Timotheus and Manetho evidently consisted in adapting the Memphite cult to its Alexandrian form." Cf. Bell 1953: 19–20. The latter also gives an especially bigoted representation of the process of Hellenization (1953: 2): "Egyptian religion, in particular, consisted largely of primitive and barbarous myths, of magical formulae, and of highly formal ritual; the spiritual significance assigned to the myth of Isis and Osiris by a writer like Plutarch is mainly the work of the Greek mind working on Egyptian material . . . and the subtle Greek mind, with its passion for order and analysis, gave to these cults, when taken over, a coherence and a systematic formulation often lacking in their original shape . . ."

²⁶ Fraser 1960: 2–3; in his second article (1967), he deals expressly with the early origins of the cult, focusing primarily on the foundation of the Sarapieion at Alexandria, since "The god, having been introduced, at least in his Greek form, by Soter (or by Philadelphus), this worship can only have been inaugurated by the establishment of a public shrine" (39) and "The importance of the Alexandrian Sarapieion in the later Ptolemaic and Imperial periods is in itself enough to account for the almost entire submersion of the primitive link with Memphis" (24). Though he acknowledges the pre-Greek origins of Sarapis, for Fraser the "real" history of the cult can only begin with the royal fiat of Ptolemy.

²⁷ As Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 38 point out.

²⁸ A fairly extreme example of the "separatist" argument applied to religion is found in Samuel 1983: 63–101, who argues that even if Greeks worshipped Egyptian divinities such as Sarapis and Isis, they did so entirely on Greek terms, and thus there was no real change in Greek religious practice. This leads to the rather overstated claim that "the oft-mentioned synthesis of Hellenic and eastern religions never really took place. In religion as in everything else, Greek conservatism asserted itself. Although surrounded by new ideas . . . the Greeks managed to insulate themselves from novelty . . . and remained almost purely Hellenic for the three hundred years of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt" (101). Samuel 1989: 46 briefly restates this view. A similar view was put forth earlier by Swinnen 1973. Cf. the criticisms of Ritner 1992.

²⁹ Stambaugh 1972 is an important forerunner to the work of Borgeaud and Volokhine discussed below, in that he adopted a more critical perspective on the foundation myth (esp. 1972: 8–13), and recognized the ongoing process of interpreting Sarapis (1972: 68–74). See also Dunand 1999: esp. 105–12, in which she discusses the double imagery of Sarapis–Osiris.

neither a moment of fusion, nor the historical foundation on Greek terms of a Sarapis cult separate from Egyptian religion; in fact, the story does not necessarily represent an historical origin of the cult at all. The account in Plutarch and Tacitus, they argue, is relatively late and governed both by classical motifs of “revelation” (ῥεῶσις) and by the Egyptian genre of the *Königsnovelle*. The story shows remarkable affinities with accounts of divine dream revelations in Greek and Egyptian literature, and especially earlier texts of this kind pertaining to the cult itself.³⁰ They situate the story, which explains the Alexandrian iconography rather than the origins of Sarapis,³¹ in the wider context of a complex, erudite, and contentious hermeneutical discourse surrounding the enigmatic god, a discourse that used interpretative strategies drawn from both Greek and Egyptian fields of knowledge. The importance of this contribution is that Borgeaud and Volokhine recognize the origin story not as a decisive moment fixing the nature of a syncretic cult (however understood), but as the representation of one encounter in an ongoing contest over meaning which had origins before the putative moment of foundation and continued up to Plutarch and Tacitus and beyond.

Earlier theories of the creation of Sarapis and more recent discontent with such approaches show the extent to which such investigations are implicated in a wider set of difficulties created by the term “syncretism” and the history of its use. Syncretism has long been a politically loaded concept, and many scholars have advocated critical redefinition or total abandonment.³² As its use in the history of Hellenistic religions shows, the term often assumes a broad narrative of interaction between cultures in which agency is asymmetrical, one favored culture dominating the other and determining the (successful) outcome.³³ On the other hand, negative views of syncretic phenomena as contaminated or inauthentic have given rise to anti-syncretic discourses based on essentializing notions of cultural identity.³⁴ Indeed, those seeking to exempt a particular

³⁰ Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 38–53. Note that these are often interpreted in an inverse relationship: the earlier testimony as influenced by the later narratives.

³¹ Just as J. Z. Smith 1971: 239 suggested. The origin of Sarapis’ iconography is explained by the story of a new statue being introduced and by the joint recognition by Greek and Egyptian interpreters that the statue from Sinope is both Pluto and Sarapis.

³² See, for example, the collection of essays in *Historical Reflections/Réflexions historiques* 27.3 (2001).

³³ Lincoln 2001: 458–59 has recently pointed out the underlying sexual trope in celebratory narratives of syncretism and its hybrid results. The roles of each culture in such narratives are hardly chosen without political interest on the part of scholars. The question of “who tells the story, who identifies with which characters, who is figured as subject, and whom as object,” all boils down to “the question of who in the narrative is permitted to penetrate whom.”

³⁴ On discourses of syncretism and anti-syncretism, see Stewart and Shaw 1994.

religious phenomenon from the category of syncretism are often interested in defending cultural and religious boundaries of authenticity, purity, uniqueness, or orthodoxy.³⁵ In this view, any apparent products of the synthesis or fusion of two cultures, like Sarapis, must be understood as thoroughly integrated into one party in the intercultural encounter, effectively erasing the historical role of the other.

This latter point raises a more fundamental problem with syncretism, and especially its use as a phenomenological category. Though it may assume or efface a prior account of origins, defining a religious phenomenon as “syncretic” (or not) says almost nothing about the ongoing discourses and processes in which it is embedded, rendering syncretism static – a *fait accompli*. Even when syncretism is considered as a process, it may be represented as curiously agentless and inevitable, the result of passive acculturation, or the unconscious harmonization of structures.³⁶ Neglecting the active processual dimension risks further obscuring the workings of power and agency inherent in syncretism. As Bruce Lincoln has observed, “Syncretism . . . is the product of a tense, contradictory and unstable field of conflictual engagement, in which every signifier is a site of encounter, maneuver, advance, retreat and negotiation . . .”³⁷ Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw have argued that in observing these processes, it is necessary to regard the agents involved, their own interpretations of what they are doing, and the positions they take in relation to the fusion of religious phenomena, since the politics of religious synthesis are often implicated in the same issues of purity or vital hybridity, authenticity or corruption evident in the scholarly syncretism/anti-syncretism discourse.³⁸ Remaining attentive to the way adherents of “syncretistic” religions address

³⁵ Cf. Droge 2001: 382–84 who demonstrates the limits put on syncretism in Christianity and Judaism (as opposed to other Hellenistic religions) by scholars concerned that the former preserve their essential character, whatever elements may become incorporated in them.

³⁶ Cf. Stewart and Shaw 1994: 6–7. Note, for example, Martin 2001, who favors investigating the “rules by which syncretic formations are produced” by drawing analogies to genetics and cognitive science, but with little regard for human operations within these rules.

³⁷ Lincoln 2001: 457. Lincoln, however, emphasizes syncretism in situations of unequal power, to some extent neglecting the variety of other situations and strategies involved in such phenomena. Cf. Alles 2001: 442.

³⁸ Stewart and Shaw 1994. Stewart 1999 provides further reflections on the history of the term “syncretism” and reaffirms the methodological importance of remaining attentive to the frames of reference (those of insiders and those of scholars and other outsiders). Alles 2001: 438–43 even proposes a definition of syncretism in which the conscious transgression of boundaries of identity is essential, i.e. syncretism “as cultural exchange that transgresses boundaries of identity prevalent in the contexts in which the exchange occurs by combining elements associated with several different identities, none of which is sufficiently dominant to establish the identity of the resulting products” (443). He also rightly insists (441) that “if syncretism reflects contested identities, it should reflect the identity consciousness of insiders, not scholars.” Furthermore, Alles suggests (452) that “if syncretism

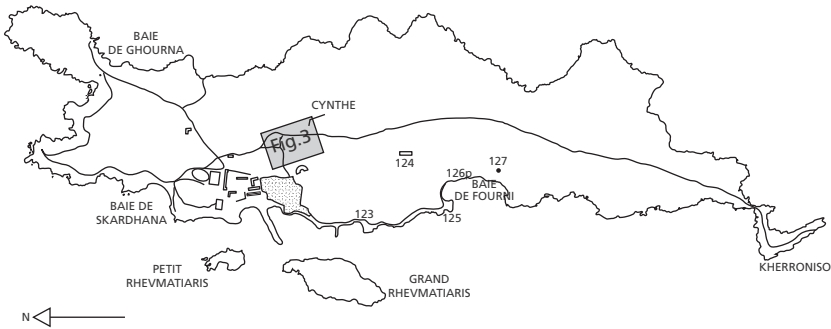


Fig. 2. Map of Delos. Bruneau and Ducat 1983: 16. © ÉfA.

these issues is critical to formulating more clearly the questions fundamental to the study of Hellenistic religions: questions concerning the dynamics of persistence and change, tradition and innovation.³⁹

The Delian aretalogy with its story of a conflict surrounding the Hellenistic cult of an Egyptian god, a cult arrived in Greece but still connected to Egypt, provides a unique moment through which to explore these dynamics. Like the account of Sarapis' arrival in Alexandria, the Delian aretalogy purports to be a story of origins, but this was also a story implicated in interpretative discourses, both Greek and Egyptian, through which participants in this "syncretistic" religion worked out issues of identity and authenticity. To explore this story, I shall approach the aretalogy not only as a monument to a successful outcome, but also as a continuing response that may reveal the nature of the conflict itself, and how it was understood by the authors of the text.

THE STORY ACCORDING TO APOLLONIOS AND MAIISTAS

The Delian Sarapis aretalogy was discovered in the open courtyard of Sarapieion A, a small sanctuary of relatively humble construction on the bank of the Inopos River below Mount Cynthus (see figs. 2–4). The courtyard measured about 12 meters by 6 meters at its largest dimensions, and was

is going to be a serious topic in the study of Greco-Roman antiquity, and more specifically Greco-Roman religions, then scholars of that world need to explore the varieties of identity-consciousness present in the Greco-Roman world with much greater energy and subtlety than have been devoted to them until now."

³⁹ The questions presented forty years ago by J. Z. Smith 1971: 236–39 and esp. 249, are still an important guide.

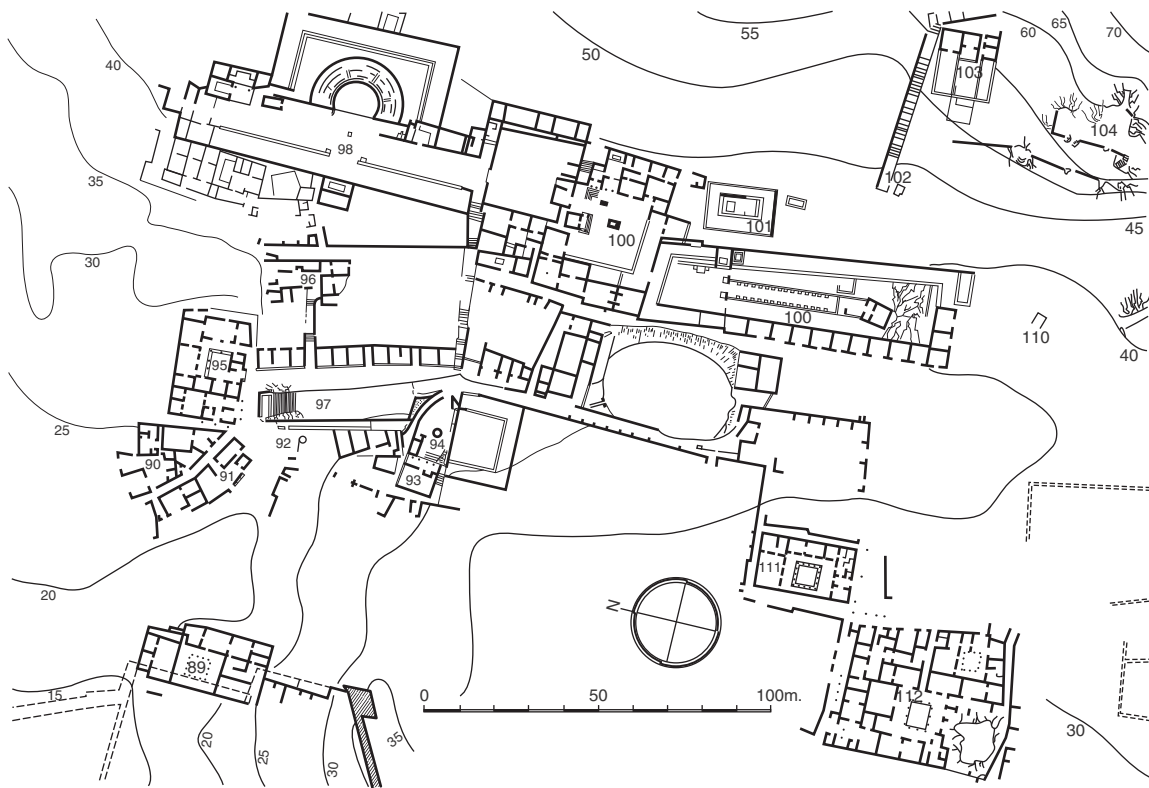


Fig. 3. Map of Inopos Valley. Bruneau and Ducat 1983: Plan IV. © ÉfA. 91 = Sarapieion A; 96 = Sarapieion B; 100 = Sarapieion C.

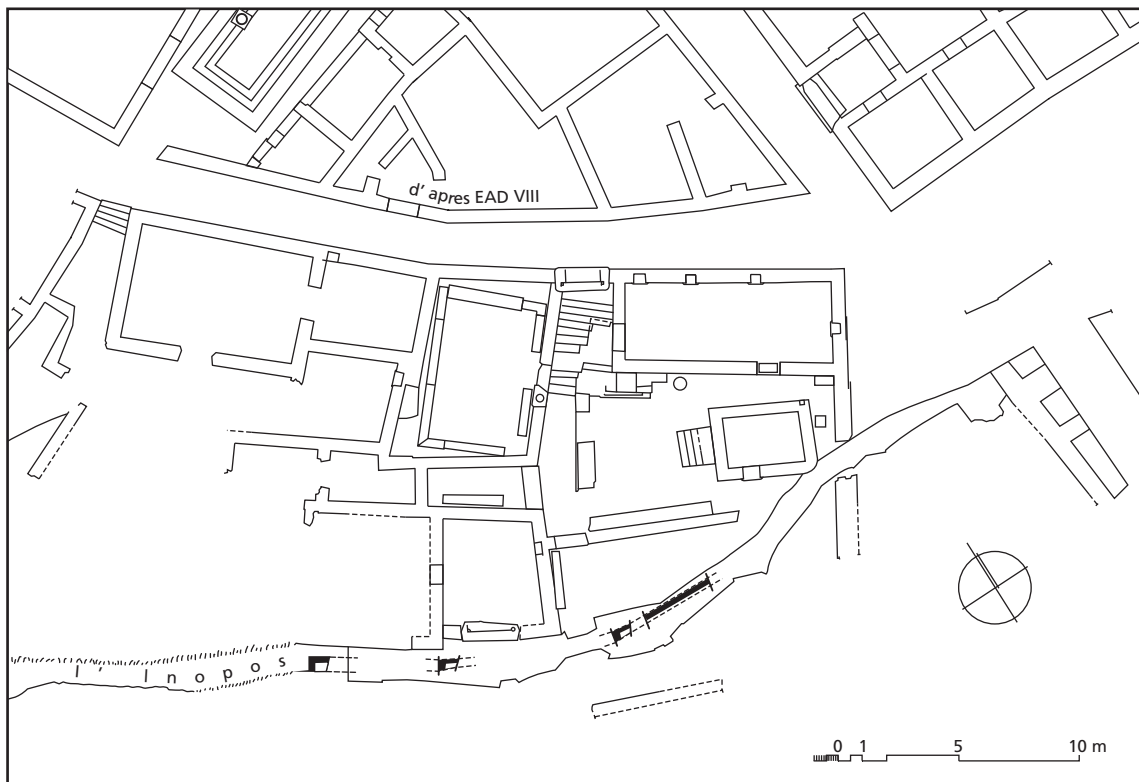


Fig. 4. Plan of Sarapieion A and area. Siard [1998](#): 470. © ÉfA.

oriented around a small *naos* at the eastern end. On the north and south sides, the courtyard was once flanked by porticoes, and a communal dining chamber stood at the western end.⁴⁰ The aretalogy was inscribed on a small pillar, 1.25 m tall and 26.5 cm at its widest diameter, which probably stood in the courtyard and bore nothing but a simple capital and the text itself.⁴¹ According to the opening lines, the priest Apollonios set up the monument, but no precise date is given. On palaeographical grounds, Roussel placed the inscription at the end of the third century BCE. The letters, however, are small and roughly carved, and he relied as much on another more carefully inscribed dedication to Nike by the priest Apollonios and the *therapeutai*, which may refer to the same events as the aretalogy. This is not a secure argument, since the diagnostic palaeographical features of the dedication to Nike differ from the aretalogy and suggest, if anything, that the aretalogy was inscribed later than the dedication.⁴² In any case, such

⁴⁰ Roussel 1915–16: 19–32 describes the structure, and notes (29) that the materials used in its construction were of mediocre quality, the only luxury being marble benches donated by devotees. There is also a very brief description in Vallois 1944: 85–86. For the most recent excavations, and a revised plan, see Siard 1998.

⁴¹ *CE* 1 = *IG* XI.4 1299 = *RICIS* 202/0101 (for a photograph, see Bricault 2005: vol. 3, pl. xxxix). The text has been republished a number of times: Roussel 1915–16: no. 1; Dittenberger, *SIG* 663 (lines 1–29 only); Weinreich 1919: 31–33; Powell 1925: 68–71; Wilhelm 1934; Fraser 1960: 50; Engelmann 1964; Longo 1969; Engelmann 1975. For previous English translations, see Nock 1933a: 51–52 (partial); Austin 1981: 226–27 (prose section only); Burstein 1985: 99–100 (prose section only); McLean 1996: 206–8. The text on which the following discussion is based includes my recent minor corrections and alternate conjectures (Moyer 2008). See Appendix 1 for the text and translation. The column, now on display in the Delos Museum, is 125 cm in height; 26.5 cm in diameter at the base, and 20 cm at the top. As Bruneau 1973: 130 notes, four iron pegs are embedded in the column in two pairs (at 32 and 106 cm from the base), each pair consisting of pegs on opposite sides of the column. These are now flush with the surface, but originally projected. Bruneau argues that the pegs were added later when the column was reused as the center post of a two-part window, since one of the pegs interferes with the final word of line 8 in the inscription. The word in question (θε[ο]ύς), however, occupies more than the usual space, suggesting that the letter-cutter was in fact working around a pre-existing obstacle created by the broken-off peg.

⁴² See Roussel 1913: 318 and 1915–16: 85, 245 n. 3 along with his notes to *IG* XI.4 1299 for his dating of the aretalogy on the basis of the dedication. Reger 1994a: 35–39 has found the letters Α, Π, Σ, and Μ to be the most diagnostic for dating inscriptions in the Cyclades in this period. In reexamining *CE* 1 (the aretalogy) and *CE* 3 (the dedication; = *RICIS* 202/0121) I observed significant differences in the forms of these letters. The Α of *CE* 3 has a curved cross-bar, suggesting a date in the second half of the third century or early in the second century. The more cramped and variable style of *CE* 1 shows a mixture of straight, curved, and perhaps even some broken crossbars, suggesting a similar or slightly later date. The Π of *CE* 3 has a shorter right hasta and the horizontal bar projects to the right, while in *CE* 1, the hastae are equal or almost equal in length and the horizontal bar varies, sometimes projecting, sometimes not. In *CE* 1, the outer hastae of Σ and of Μ are straight, whereas in *CE* 3 they are splayed. In general, this would suggest a later date for *CE* 1, but the straight form appeared as early as the 260s BCE on Delos, and the splayed forms persisted into the second century (ca. 170 BCE). See further Moyer 2008. For a photograph of a squeeze of *CE* 1 see Bruneau 1973: 132, fig. 13. A photo of *CE* 3 may be found in Roussel 1915–16: 79, fig. 13 and in Bricault 2005: vol. 3, pl. xli.

palaeographical estimates cannot fix the date of the text within a narrower range than about fifty years. The only other clues come from Apollonios' genealogy, to which I shall turn shortly, but in the absence of an absolute date on which to anchor the chronology it provides, this information allows only vague estimates in the same approximate range as the palaeographical dating.⁴³ All that can be said with any confidence, then, is that the column was erected in Sarapieion A by the priest Apollonios some time in the late third or early second century BCE.

The pillar displays two versions of the events which it commemorates: a basic prose account by the priest Apollonios (ll. 1–29), and a longer, more elaborate version (ll. 30–94), in which the poet Maiistas recasts the story as an hexametrical hymn in praise of Sarapis. In the layout of the text on the stone, a separate line introducing the hymn and a shift of the left margin distinguish the two texts. This presentation invites a dual reading, so I shall first examine the basic narrative, which is centered on the Egyptian priest Apollonios and his ancestors, and then consider Maiistas' re-presentation of this history in a "Hellenistic" form.

A PRIEST'S TALE: NARRATIVE PATTERNS AND EGYPTIAN IDENTITY

The shorter prose account outlines the basic story. Apollonios begins with his grandfather and namesake, an Egyptian of the priestly class, who brought the god, presumably a cult image, from Egypt to the island of Delos, and continued to worship according to his ancestral custom (l. 5: *θεραπεύων τε διετέλει καθὼς πάτριον ἦν*). When the elder Apollonios died, apparently at the advanced age of 97,⁴⁴ his son Demetrios assumed the priesthood, and was honored for his piety with a bronze statue, which at the time of the inscription stood in the temple. Demetrios lived

⁴³ Engemann 1975: 13–14 presents a reconstructed chronology of the arrival of Apollonios I and the succession of his son and his grandson to the priesthood, but it is based on a number of unverifiable assumptions, the most important of which is that Apollonios II began his priesthood no later than 205 BCE. This date is based on evidence that Sarapieion B was active from at least 202 BCE (Roussel 1915–16: 250), and the assumption that Sarapieion A must have been built before Sarapieion B in the priesthood of Apollonios II. Without making this assumption, there is no evidence to prevent a date for Apollonios' succession as late as ca. 180 BCE, or, for that matter, as early as 220 BCE. Despite the uncertainties, the dates given by Engemann have been adopted by Mora 1990: 1.18–19, 41, though some errors on his part muddy the waters. The inscriptions in question (*CE* 1 and *CE* 3) are misnumbered, and he states (p. 18) that "Per Roussel la dedica a Nike [i.e. *CE* 3] non è opera del nipote omonimo n. 121 ma di questo Ἀπολλώνιος [i.e. the elder]," which misrepresents Roussel. On the dating of the entire sequence of events, cf. also Świderek 1975: 671–72, who favors a very early date for the arrival of Apollonios I (ca. 300 BCE), and the more cautious approach of Fraser 1960: 22–23.

⁴⁴ l. 6: *ζώσαί τε δοκεῖ ἔτη ἐνενήκοντα καὶ ἑπτὰ*.

sixty-one years. The younger Apollonios then succeeded to his father's and his grandfather's office and assiduously devoted himself to the religious services. In a dream oracle, the god declared to him that a private Sarapieion must be built for him, and that he must no longer dwell in rented quarters. Sarapis said that he himself would find the place and indicate it to Apollonios. This was accomplished through a notice posted in a passageway of the agora,⁴⁵ advertising a plot of land, which was being used for a manure pile or compost heap (ll. 18–19: ὁ γὰρ τόπος οὗτος ἦν | κόπρου μεστός).⁴⁶ Since the god willed it, writes Apollonios, the purchase of the land was completed, and the temple quickly constructed in six months. Certain men, however, conspired against Apollonios and the god, and brought the priest and the sanctuary up on a public charge which carried a fine or penalty. In another dream vision, the god predicted that they would prove victorious in the case. When the struggle was over and the priest had won “in a manner worthy of the god,” he praised the gods of the sanctuary and offered appropriate thanks.

The longer hymn has the same narrative structure as the prose version, but fills out the story with more details. Maiistas, for example, locates the Egyptian origin of the elder Apollonios in Memphis, and also mentions that when the grandfather arrived on Delos, he established the god in his own dwelling (l. 39). The poet expands on Apollonios' allusion to divine favor in the award of a statue to Demetrios, by including an account of another dream injunction (ll. 43–46). In answer to Demetrios' prayers, Sarapis appeared and ordered him to set up the statue.⁴⁷ The episode of Sarapis' command to found a sanctuary and his revelation of the site includes an account of Apollonios' prayers, and the construction itself is dressed up with details of fragrant altars and couches for feasts. Among Maiistas' poetical elaborations, however, the trial receives the most expansive treatment. In his hymn, malice or envy (Φθόνος, l. 66) provoked Apollonios' accusers and the poet paints a vivid portrait of the priest's distress. As in the shorter narrative, the god predicts victory, but Maiistas also describes the god's intervention in the trial itself. Before all the citizens and the mixed crowds of

⁴⁵ Perhaps the passageway in the middle of the South Stoa of the Agora of the Delians as Bruneau 1975: 281–82 suggested.

⁴⁶ For κόπρος as green manure, see Xen. *Oec.* 20.10–11.

⁴⁷ Syntactic difficulties in this passage have attracted several discussions and emendations. See Moyer 2008 for discussion. The prose account only mentions that Demetrios was “crowned by the god” (ἐστεφανώθη ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) with a statue. Because of the difference in the two accounts, Wilhelm 1934: 4–12 argued that they referred to two different statues, but Engelmann 1975: 32–36 is more convincing: the bronze statue mentioned in both versions is the same one, even if the account in Maiistas includes further details of the circumstances in which Demetrios was honored.

visitors to Delos, the poet claims, the god paralyzed the priest's opponents, rendering them unable to speak. This, Maiistas claims, was the ἀρετή, the miraculous power that dazzled onlookers and gave glory to the priest.

The pillar commemorates a legal victory, and this monument was presumably part of the “worthy thanks” that Apollonios offered to Sarapis in return for his victory (l. 28). And yet, for all the details provided in ninety-four lines of text and two versions of the story, the nature of the case brought against Apollonios and the sanctuary is left rather vague. The priest describes the action as public (ll. 24–25: κρίσιν . . . δημοσίαν) rather than private, so the accusation, whether or not it also involved an individual grievance, must have alleged some harm to the broader community. A common phrase derived from Attic legal usage further describes the case, but only in a procedural sense. Apollonios says he was brought up on a charge “for punishment or fine” (l. 25: τί χρεὶ παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι), indicating that the suit was an ἀγών τιμητός, one in which the law did not fix the nature of the penalty or damages in advance.⁴⁸ These distinctions provide little help in identifying the charges, since public cases for which the law specified no penalty covered a wide range of offences.⁴⁹ Maiistas implies that the trial took place in a temple or sanctuary, but this does not necessarily mean that the trial concerned religious matters,⁵⁰ and in blaming Φθόνος for inciting Apollonios' opponents, he insinuates that the real cause was envy or animosity on their part. In the absence of clear evidence in the text itself, scholars have proposed a number of possible legal bases for the conflict. Since the trial follows the construction of the Sarapieion, most have suggested that the alleged offence was committed in the process of buying the land or building the sanctuary: perhaps the priest neglected to obtain permission as a foreigner to own the land or to build a sanctuary of foreign gods; perhaps he built beyond the edges of his property; or maybe

⁴⁸ Engelmann 1975: 23 remarks briefly on this legal usage. See Harrison 1998: 2.80–82. Harp., s.v. ἀτίμητος ἀγών καὶ τιμητός, uses the same expression: τοὺς δικαστὰς ἔδει τιμᾶσθαι ὃ τι χρεὶ παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτίσαι. This phrase occurs a number of times in Demosthenes, especially in quotations of laws. See, e.g., 21.47, 24.63, 24.105. The phrase itself is discussed as a formula in 24.118, 24.146.

⁴⁹ This was certainly the case in Athens, on which see Harrison 1998: 2.75–76, 80–82. Apart from a few important exceptions such as the law on the sale of wood and charcoal (*IG* XI.3 509), the laws of Delos in the period of independence are not nearly as well known. There were some differences, but the influence of Athens is detectable in institutions such as the Delian Heliaria, and in terms such as those discussed above, so Athenian law can provide an approximate guide to the procedures on Delos. For an overview, see Vial 1984: 147–62.

⁵⁰ Lines 81–82: ἀλλόπότε χρόνος ἵξε δικασπόλος, ἔγρετο ναοῖς | πᾶσα πόλις (Vial 1984: 156). Bruneau 1975: 280–83 also proposed the idea of a trial regarding religious matters and speculated that the dual (δοῖω) in line 68 may refer to the *hieropoioi* who (though actually four in number) supervised the temples. The indeclinable adjective more likely refers to the lawsuit (δίκη) or serves as an adverbial accusative.

he failed to pay the necessary taxes on the land purchase.⁵¹ The most recent suggestion connects the charges against the priest and the sanctuary with archaeological evidence for the diversion of water to the private sanctuary from the Inopos, a public water source.⁵² This is an appealing solution, but there is no way to be certain, since Apollonios and Maiistas chose to remain silent on the matter.

This silence should be seen not simply as neglect or circumspect reticence, but as part of the authors' strategy in framing the event. Whatever the actual circumstances, the creators of this monument did not choose to present the victory in terms of a legal decision or as a vindication of particular rights or privileges. Though the authors used technical terminology, the inscription did not function as a public document asserting particular legal claims. Apollonios could well have chosen this option. Shortly after the Athenians were given control of Delos in 166 BCE, his descendant, Demetrius of Rhenaia, was successful in resisting an attempt to close the Sarapieion. He erected an inscription recording the text of a *senatus consultum* in which the Romans prevented interference with his cult and granted him permission to continue his worship. In this clear and neatly inscribed text, he also included a letter from the Athenian στρατηγοί to the governor of Delos confirming the decision.⁵³ A little later, the Herakleists of Tyre set up a record of their delegation to Athens arranging for permission to construct a temple on Delos (*IDélos* 1519, 153/2 BCE). In similar situations of conflict over Egyptian sanctuaries in other Greek cities, the settlement, in the form of a legal or political decision, was inscribed and set up as a permanent record of rights and obligations.⁵⁴ Apollonios, on the other

⁵¹ See Siard 1998: 477–80 for a discussion of these theories and objections that may be raised against them. She rightly points out (477–78) that the time between the opening of the sanctuary and the trial is not specified, nor is a relationship of cause and effect necessarily indicated. In support of her point, it is perhaps interesting to note that there is a one-letter space in line 23 of the inscription which falls between the end of the account of the construction and the beginning of the trial narrative. Perhaps this was meant to mark a break or pause. The legal theories are as follows. Failure to obtain permission to own land: Vial 1984: 156. Lack of permission to build a foreign sanctuary: Roussel 1915–16: 251; Engelmann 1975: 44–45; Vial 1984: 156; Bruneau 1990: 562. Building over a neighboring plot: Engelmann 1975: 45, 52. Encroachment on spring of Inopos and conversion of domestic property to cultic use: White 1990: 36. Tax evasion: Baslez 1996: 47–48.

⁵² See Siard 1998: esp. 480–83.

⁵³ *CE* 14 = *RICIS* 202/0195. Cf. de Rossi 2000, who has proposed a very late date (58 or 52 BCE) for this inscription (discussed further below).

⁵⁴ An inscription from Laodicea ad Mare, dated 174 BCE, contains the decree of the Peliganes (the elders) granting Egyptian priests a guarantee of the ownership of the land on which their temple stood in the event that someone asked for a site on which to set up a statue (*RICIS* 402/0301). For discussion, see Fraser 1960: 40; Baslez 1996: 42–43. A second-century BCE decree from Samos reconfirms the rights of Isis priests to take up a collection (*RICIS* 205/0102). The second-century BCE decree from Magnesia on the Maeander (Sokolowski 1955: no. 34 = *RICIS* 304/0701), which regulates the cult of Sarapis, seems to have resulted from a conflict over the site of the sanctuary

hand, chose to embed his allusive account of the legal conflict in a longer narrative that is shaped by three prominent features: his priestly lineage, the repeated motif of dream commands, and the trial itself. Rather than offering legal grounds, each of these makes mutually supporting claims about the legitimate status of the priests and their sanctuary on the basis of Egyptian religious traditions and narrative patterns.

THE GENEALOGY OF THE PRIESTS

Apollonios' narrative of the beginnings of the cult and the foundation of the sanctuary at first takes a genealogical form that insists on the current priest's descent from an Egyptian of the priestly class (l. 3: Αἰγύπτιος ἐκ τῶν ἱερέων), and on his ancestors' pious observance of traditional religious rites. Though some have doubted the Egyptian ethnicity of this lineage of priests, most have accepted the claim as at the very least plausible, since there is substantial documentary evidence of Egyptians throughout the Greek areas of the eastern Mediterranean from the fourth century BCE onward.⁵⁵ A well-known inscription from the Piraeus, dated 333/2 BCE refers to an earlier grant of permission to own land (ἐγκτησις) awarded to a group of Egyptians so that they could construct an Isis temple. Some Egyptians at Eretria also made a dedication to Isis in the fourth century.⁵⁶ Individuals are also known: a mid-third-century BCE stele from Demetrias in Thessaly marked the grave of Ouaphres, son of Horus, a priest of Isis who was probably from Busiris in Egypt.⁵⁷ On Delos itself, a private dedicatory inscription to Isis, dating to the third century BCE, bears a non-Greek name, Taessa, which may be an Egyptian transliteration.⁵⁸ Cult regulations from Priene in Asia Minor show that around 200 BCE the priest performing

(see Sokolowski 1974: 446–47). A decree of Philip V, dated 187 BCE, and found in the Serapieion at Thessaloniki, forbids the use of funds of the Sarapis sanctuary for other purposes (*RICIS* 113/0503). This text, however, probably relates to a public cult (Fraser 1960: 38–39).

⁵⁵ Nock 1933a: 53 seems to have considered the appeal to ancestral custom fictitious; Świderek 1975 argues that Apollonios and his descendants were really Hellenomemphites; Baslez 1977 seems inconsistent (cf. pp. 46 and 235–37). Most others have considered Apollonios and his descendants Egyptian. See, e.g., Roussel 1915–16: 245–48; Engelmann 1975: 11–12.

⁵⁶ *RICIS* 101/0101, ll. 42–45; *RICIS* 104/0101.

⁵⁷ *RICIS* 112/0701: Οὐάφρης Ὡρου | Ποσειρίτης, ἱεὺς | Ἰσιδος, χαῖρε. The name Οὐάφρης is a transliteration of *Wḥ-ib-Rʿ*, the name of the Egyptian pharaoh more commonly known in Greek as Apries.

⁵⁸ In *CE* 40 (= *RICIS* 202/0160), a dedication of an altar from Serapieion C, the name Τάεσσα may be equivalent to the Egyptian *Ta-is.t* ("she of Isis"). Though no exact parallels to this transliteration appear, some are similar: Τησαι, Τησε, Τηση; see also the Coptic ΤΗΣΑΙ and ΤΗΣΕ (Lüddeckens 1980–2000: 1166–67). Compare *CE* 63 (= *RICIS* 202/0189), also from Serapieion C, a dedication to Men, made by a certain Τάσσα. This may also contain the *ta-* "she of" prefix, but the second element is less clear. Determining the equivalents of these names is difficult, since they are attested nowhere else.

sacrifices in the cult of Egyptian gods in that city was required to be an Egyptian with the requisite ritual knowledge.⁵⁹ Egyptians, in short, did leave their homeland in the early Hellenistic period and participate in the cults of Egyptian gods in Greek cities,⁶⁰ so it is entirely possible that when the elder Apollonios came to Delos, he was indeed an Egyptian and had an Egyptian name in addition to his Greek one. If so, his use of a Greek name – not at all surprising in a Greek context – in no way invalidates the author's explicit assertion of Egyptian ethnicity.⁶¹ Indeed, the combined appeal to descent and a homeland are entirely typical of ethnic self-identification.⁶²

Apollonios' genealogy is not, of course, a claim to ethnicity alone; it is also a claim to inherited priestly status presented along traditional

⁵⁹ *RICIS* 304/0802, ll. 21–25.

⁶⁰ An Egyptian, Horus of Canopus, was the author of a remarkable bilingual (Greek and Demotic Egyptian) dedication from Samos (*RICIS* 205/0101) to “the Falcon, Horus of Buto” (*P3-bik-Hr-n-P*). There is also a priest named Horus mentioned in connection with the cult of Egyptian gods at Laodicea ad Mare mentioned above (*RICIS* 402/0301). On Rhodes, a certain Dionysios of Ialos presented a statue to *Wsr-Hp* with a dedicatory inscription in Demotic Egyptian (see *RICIS* 204/0111, including Bricault 2005: vol. 3, pl. LXXIII). Even if the dedicator was not of Egyptian ethnicity (Fraser 1960: 27 n. 3), he had either become literate in Demotic Egyptian, or he had a literate Egyptian, possibly a priest, inscribe the statue.

⁶¹ Świderek 1975: 672–74, in arguing that Apollonios I was a Hellenomemphite, considered it improbable that an Egyptian at such an early date would have adopted a Greek name. A late fifth/early fourth century BCE tombstone from Athens (*JG I*³ 1341bis), however, mentions an Egyptian weaver from Thebes named Hermaios ((Ε)ρμαῖος Αἰγύπτιος ἐχ' Θηβῶν γναφαλλουφάντης – see Merritt 1934: 87 no. 105; Bresson 2000: 34). Świderek's argument, moreover, is based on her assumption that Apollonios I arrived on Delos ca. 300 BCE, which would be very early indeed. Others have proposed dates ranging from ca. 300–245 BCE (e.g. Roussel 1915–16: 245; Fraser 1960: 22–23; Engelmann 1975: 13–14), often favoring the period of Ptolemaic hegemony in the Cyclades (ca. 288–245 BCE), but as Fraser 1960: 33, 38–40 pointed out, even Antigonid or Seleucid control of an area was no obstacle to the spread of the cult. Apollonios I, therefore, could very easily have arrived on Delos and introduced a domestic cult of Sarapis in the second half of the third century BCE, when there was no significant outside political presence on the island (see Reger 1994a). Even if Apollonios I arrived on Delos in 230 BCE (for example), and one assumes that Apollonios II founded Serapieion A around 200 (it could certainly be later or earlier, of course), that would still allow around fifteen years each for his priesthood and that of his son, Demetrios. A second point: Peremans' important study (1970) shows that the evidence for double names, though certainly more copious in the second and first centuries BCE, does begin already in the third. Another example, recently discovered at Deir el-Bahri is the bilingual (Greek-Demotic) graffito of Πτολεμαῖος / *Hr* son of Βάλλος / *Br*, dated 255/4 BCE (Łajtar 2006: 364–65, no. 289). “Abnormal filiation” (i.e. families in which the parents have Greek names and the children Egyptian, or vice versa) is likewise more prominent in the second and first centuries, but attested already in the third. On double names, see also Clarysse 1985. Unfortunately, the salt tax registers of *P. Count*, which include large numbers of names from the third century, did not report double names, but there are third century cases of “irregular filiation” (Clarysse and Thompson 2006: 2.323–27). An early example of this phenomenon is also found in the statue of Senu, whose father appears to have had the Greek name Jason (see Derchain 2000: 44–53; Lloyd 2002: 123–27; Gorre 2009a: 103–18, no. 27). In any case, the ancestor of this line of priests on Delos is explicitly identified as an Egyptian from the priestly classes.

⁶² Hall 1997: 17–33, esp. 25–26.

Egyptian lines.⁶³ In the earlier chapter on Herodotus' meeting with the Theban priests, I presented evidence that the Egyptian contribution to this generative encounter stemmed from a tradition of biographical texts which often included lengthy priestly genealogies laying claim to the legitimate tenure of a priesthood. These genealogical texts became an especially prominent part of priestly self-representation in the Third Intermediate Period of Egyptian history, and the tradition continued into the Ptolemaic period. The hereditary principle for the tenure of priesthoods was certainly maintained at Memphis, the city which the elder Apollonios left behind when he traveled to Delos. Among the most important religious offices in Ptolemaic Egypt was that of the high priest of Ptah at Memphis, and the hereditary succession to this priesthood can be reconstructed almost in its entirety right down to the early Roman period. Other important priestly offices there and elsewhere in Egypt were also handed down from father to son, or controlled by a small group of interconnected families.⁶⁴ At Memphis, there is even a genealogy of masons belonging to the Apis cult that stretches back twelve generations.⁶⁵ The descendants of Apollonios likewise kept their priesthood of Sarapis in the family, a practice which is attested in at least two other cases outside Egypt.⁶⁶ Judging by

⁶³ There are well-known examples of priesthoods in the Greek world that were passed on within a family, but these must be distinguished from the Egyptian pattern. In classical Athens, for example, the Eteoboutadaí, the Praxiergidai, the Eumolpidai and the Kerykes controlled certain priesthoods, but these were "gentile" rather than hereditary in a single lineage (Feaver 1957). Priests were selected from within the *genos* by a process of sortition or election. This is quite different from the ideal of father-son succession in Egyptian priesthoods. There is also no comparable tradition of priestly genealogies elaborated within a biographical or autobiographical literature in the Greek world. A partial exception could be adduced in the long list of priests of Poseidon Isthmios from Halikarnassos (*SIG* 1020, dated ca. 240–140 BCE), which purports to include an earlier list that takes the first priest back to the seventh century BCE (Descat 1997: 413). Much of this text is undoubtedly fictive, but even so, the office does not pass from father to son in a direct line of descent. Rather, succession seems to pass to the eldest in each generation of descent from the apical ancestor of the kin group, therefore often passing from brother to brother, or between cousins. For discussion, see Broadbent 1968: 23–37, 39–41.

⁶⁴ On Ptolemaic priestly genealogies, the monopolization of important priestly offices by certain families, and the high priests of Ptah in particular, see Thompson 1988: 128–30, 138–46. See also Quaegebeur 1980 and Thompson 1990. Examples are also found in other parts of Egypt. Arlt forthcoming traces the genealogy of a scribal family in Ptolemaic Thebes over seven generations in the fourth and third centuries BCE. Marc Coenen in his research on Graeco-Roman funerary papyri from Egypt has reconstructed a genealogy that includes eight generations of a family who officiated in the cult of Min-Who-Massacres-His-Enemies in Thebes. Two of the funerary documents in his study include all eight generations. See esp. Coenen 2001: 74–76.

⁶⁵ See Thompson 1988: 204 n. 7.

⁶⁶ An inscription dated 174 BCE from Laodicea ad Mare in Syria (*RICIS* 402/0301) refers to a private sanctuary of Sarapis under the control of three brothers (one of whom was named Horus), and their cousins. The lineage may go back as far as a fourth generation, since the cousins are qualified as παππῶος "from the grandfather" (line 9). This qualification suggests that they are not "first

Apollonios' genealogical text, however, his family understood and represented this transmission in particularly Egyptian terms. Their priesthood is unique in the evidence of Egyptian cult outside of Egypt in explicitly asserting a strict father–son succession.

The honor bestowed on Demetrios of a statue placed in the temple (line 10: ἐν τῷ ναῷ) may also have been a nod to Egyptian priestly traditions. In Egypt, various types of sculptures depicting a priest in an attitude of service to the god were placed in temples as part of mortuary provisions, so that the deceased could continue to take part in the worship of the god.⁶⁷ These statues were often inscribed with the biographical texts and genealogies just mentioned. It is impossible to know whether such an inscription adorned Demetrios' bronze statue,⁶⁸ but in the context of Apollonios' genealogical narrative, the image in the temple served as a token of the priestly traditions of the family, and of Demetrios' efforts to preserve his religious patrimony.⁶⁹ The god himself, after all, awarded it to the priest for his piety (l. 9: διὰ δὲ τὴν εὐσέβειαν). The statue supports Apollonios' assertion that through his father's and grandfather's efforts he in turn was able to receive the sacred rites and objects (l. 12: παραλαβόντος δέ μου τὰ ἱερὰ) as part of an unbroken transmission that goes back to Egypt. Like its Egyptian antecedents, the genealogical narrative asserted the status and piety of Apollonios' ancestors and his own legitimate inheritance of the priesthood. In the Greek context of Delos, however, it also conveyed a message of traditionalism: a claim that Apollonios II was preserving authentic Egyptian traditions.

cousins," i.e. father's brother's sons, but descendants of the grandfather's brother, thus putting the putative apical ancestor of the lineage in the fourth generation. At Eretria, an inscription dating to the beginning of the second century BCE (*RICIS* 104/0103) appears to refer to a hereditary priest (Φανίαν | Ἰάσονος τὸν ἱερὴ | τεύσαντα ἐγ γένους | κατὰ τὴν μαντείαν), though no genealogy is presented.

⁶⁷ According to the *Book of the Temple*, an Egyptian guide to the construction and organization of an ideal temple, the right to a statue placed in the temple was carefully regulated (Quack 1997, Quack 2003a: 16). An especially vivid description of the religious sentiment behind a desire for a statue in the temple is found in an inscription on the statue of Senu, dated to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. See Derchain 2000: 44–48; Lloyd 2002: 125–27; Gorre 2009a: 103–18, no. 27.

⁶⁸ Though many statues of priests were made of stone, Egyptian bronze sculpture flourished in the Third Intermediate and Late Periods, and bronze statuettes of priests were made, some of which were inscribed with texts. For examples of late Egyptian bronze statuary, see Ziegler 1987: 85–93; Bianchi 1991: 64–76; Tanner 2003: 118–20. For references to Ptolemaic period bronze statues of priests, see Aubert and Aubert 2001: 401. See also Engelmann 1975: 17 for references to statues of Egyptian priests from within and outside Egypt.

⁶⁹ Demetrios serves the gods ἀκολουθῶς (line 8), "following on" or loosely "in the footsteps of his father," suggesting that he conformed to the received principles of "ancestral custom" (πάτριος νόμος) brought from Egypt by the elder Apollonios.

DREAMS, DIVINE COMMANDS, AND THE EGYPTIAN
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When Apollonios passes from his genealogical narrative to the momentous events of his own lifetime, he relates how the construction of the sanctuary on Delos was ordained by Sarapis in a dream oracle (ll. 12–18; see also 53–9 in Maiistas' version). In another dream, the god foretold victory in the lawsuit (ll. 25–26; 75–80), and Maiistas makes another oblique reference to a dream oracle explicit when he reveals that Demetrios' statue was decreed by Sarapis in a dream (ll. 9–11; 43–46). Dream oracles were, of course, familiar to the Greeks, and for that matter to any ancient Mediterranean or Near Eastern society, and this fact undoubtedly provided a common ground of mutual intelligibility in many circumstances.⁷⁰ In the Hellenistic Eastern Mediterranean, however, this phenomenon was especially prominent in the cult of Egyptian gods,⁷¹ and by using evidence from narrative sources and brief epigraphical testimonies it is possible to distinguish a discourse on divine dream commands that was particular to the worship of Sarapis and Isis. Whatever human experiences it may have represented, Apollonios' story was shaped by this discourse, and, like his genealogy, his account of dream commands ultimately appeals to an Egyptian pattern, albeit adapted to a new social, political, and cultural context. In its original form, this pattern emphasized the interrelationship between the Egyptian king and the divine pair Sarapis and Isis in their roles as supporters of the dynasty and paradigms of rulership, and as ultimate authorities in a chain of command that reinforced the legitimacy of pharaonic kingship. On Delos, however, there was no earthly king in Apollonios' lifetime. Even if the island found itself under the hegemony of one or another of the larger kingdoms in the complex and shifting world of Hellenistic interstate relations, this was an independent and democratic Greek city-state. In the absence of a king, dreams carried commands directly from the god to the priest.⁷²

⁷⁰ For Near Eastern material, see Oppenheim 1956; for Egyptian, Sauneron 1959; Vernus in *LdÄ* 6.745–49. An overview of Graeco-Roman and early Christian materials is provided by Hanson 1980; for dreams in Graeco-Roman epigraphical evidence, see Van Straten 1976, and Renberg 2003.

⁷¹ Perhaps only in the case of Asclepius did dreams hold such an important position in the cult of Greek gods. Van Straten 1976: 14 notes that though a wide range of Greek gods could be connected with dream revelations in votive dedications, by far the largest portion involved Asclepius. Sarapis was at times associated with this god because of certain shared attributes (see Stambaugh 1972: 75–79). In healing cults, dreams were predominantly part of the practice of temple medicine and incubation, as they also were in Sarapis cult, especially in later periods. Dream commands to found sanctuaries do not figure prominently in Asclepius cult.

⁷² In the second half of the third century, no single power exercised hegemony over Delos and the Cycladic Islands; from ca. 199 to 167 BCE, Rhodes was the dominant power (Reger 1994b: 19–20).

The text on the pillar takes part in this discourse of divine commands not only through Apollonios' narrative, but also through a brief formula in the opening lines of his inscription. He declares that he set up his inscription "according to a decree of the god" (κατὰ | πρόσταγμα τοῦ θεοῦ, ll. 1–2). This suggests that the inscribed pillar itself was set up in obedience to a divine command that the priest received in a fourth dream, occurring some time after those he describes in his narrative.⁷³ The κατὰ πρόσταγμα formula, and a few other closely related phrases, are typical of Greek dedications to the Egyptian gods. Like the gods themselves, the expression appears to originate in Egypt, and it is attested in a few Greek dedications found there. The formula, moreover, expresses the will of the gods in the language of Ptolemaic royal decrees,⁷⁴ thus figuring Sarapis as a divine pharaoh. This practice has contemporary Egyptian parallels, especially in the cults of Osiris, Horus, and their circle, where the language of the royal decree (*wḏ ny-sw.t*) was often used for divine commands (the so-called *Götterdekrete*).⁷⁵ Outside of Egypt, the κατὰ πρόσταγμα formula is found predominantly, though not exclusively, in dedications to the Egyptian gods.⁷⁶ A closer look at the Delian evidence strongly confirms

⁷³ The connection between this formula and dream visions is made more explicit in other inscriptions. Three from Sarapieion C refer to dedications made κατὰ πρόσταγμα διὰ ὄνειροκρίτου (*CE* 169, 169 bis, 201 = *IDélos* 2105, 2106, 2110 = *RICIS* 202/0340, 202/0341, 202/0372). Perhaps in some cases the command from the god was direct, and at other times was only deciphered with the help of a dream interpreter. On the range of "command" terminology more generally connected to dream revelations in inscriptions, see Van Straten 1976: 13. For full discussion see Renberg 2003: 67–94 (esp. pp. 76–77), 324–31 on the references to dream interpreters just cited.

⁷⁴ As observed by Lenger 1970. The examples from Egypt mostly date to the third century BCE: *SB* 8954 = Robert, *Collection Froehner* 71 (305–282 BCE, Egypt; provenance unknown); *SB* 685 = *IMEG* 112 (third century BCE, Saqqara); *SB* 9300 = *LAlex.Ptol.* 21 (221–205 BCE); *LAlex.Ptol.* 53 (third to second century BCE, Alexandria).

⁷⁵ E. Otto in *LdÄ* II.675–77, s.v. *Götterdekret*. For a discussion of some Ptolemaic examples in funerary texts, see Kákosy 1992. Note also the statue of Djedhor the savior, who lived from the late 30th Dynasty to the reign of Philip Arrhidaios; his autobiographical texts refer to his meritorious service in the Athribis falcon cult as according to the command of Khenty-Khety: "It was according to your command . . . that I caused all the goods to accrue to the Falcon in his house" (*ir.n.i shpr ht nb n p3 Bik m-hn pr.f m wdt.k*). See Sherman 1981: 90, text L2–3 (see also Gorre 2009a: 352–64, no. 70). For the royal decree (*wḏ ny-sw.t* = πρόσταγμα) in Ptolemaic Egyptian biographical texts, see Gorre 2009a: 582–84.

⁷⁶ Lenger 1970 includes a catalog of seventy-seven divine commands found in inscriptions and papyri, that use the vocabulary of Ptolemaic decrees (πρόσταγμα and related words). Of these, fifty-three (68.8%) are related to Egyptian religion. These include the Delian material discussed in more detail below. She makes a close connection between this phrase and Egyptian cults. Lenger's observations are supported by the additional epigraphic material studied by Renberg 2003. Renberg's catalog and tables 22a–e (p. 330) provide thirty-one inscriptions from areas outside Delos that use the formulae κατὰ πρόσταγμα, κατὰ προστάγματα, πρόσταγμα, ποτίταγμα, or πρόσταγμα ἔχων. Of these, eighteen (58%) relate to the cult of Egyptian gods. The Delian material is, therefore, quite comparable as far as the Egyptian portion of the total number of inscriptions with this type of

this correlation. There are sixty-one inscriptions from Delos that use the phrase κατὰ πρόσταγμα τοῦ θεοῦ or some closely related variant.⁷⁷ Of these, thirty-eight (62.3%) belong to the cult of Egyptian gods, and nine (14.75%) relate to Syrian or other Near Eastern divinities. The remaining fourteen (22.95%) relate to gods with Greek names that are not clearly connected to Egyptian or Near Eastern cults, although in some cases it may be that *interpretatio Graeca* conceals a non-Greek divinity. The connection between Egyptian cult and these formulae becomes even clearer when these numbers are considered as a proportion of the groups from which they are drawn. Decree formulae are found in 17.43% of inscriptions related to Egyptian cults (38/218), compared to 8.41% for Syrian/Near Eastern cults (9/107), and 1.53% for Greek cults (14/914); in Egyptian cult inscriptions they are over three times more common than in the body of cult inscriptions as a whole (4.92% or 61/1239), and over ten times more common than in Greek inscriptions.

The temporal distribution of inscriptions with decree formulae is also very revealing. The precise dating of Hellenistic inscriptions from Delos is not always possible, but they are commonly divided into two main periods on the basis of the island's political history: those during the period of Delian independence from 314 to 166 BCE and those after the resumption of Athenian control in 166. All twenty of the inscriptions with decree formulae that date from the period 314 to 166 BCE belong to the cult of Egyptian gods, representing 35.71% (20/56) of the Egyptian religious inscriptions before 166. The absence of Syrian and Near Eastern examples is easily explained: these cults are not attested until after Athenian

formula is concerned. Though beyond the scope of the present study, it would be valuable to obtain figures for the size of the groups (Egyptian/non-Egyptian) from which these inscriptions are drawn (as I have done for the Delian material below). For further discussion, see Renberg 2003: 181–89. Baslez 1977: 289–92 emphasizes the more generally “oriental” origins of this formula on Delos.

⁷⁷ *IDélos* 2103–12, 2180, 2181, 2220, 2264, 2280, 2281, 2284, 2294, 2303, 2307, 2312, 2321, 2355, 2364, 2374, 2380, 2389, 2424, 2437, 2443, 2451, 2474, 2529; *IG* XI.4 1224, 1225, 1230, 1231, 1233–35, 1237, 1238, 1246, 1247, 1249, 1251, 1253, 1256, 1257, 1262, 1263, 1271, 1273, 1299. For those inscriptions included in *RICIS* (too numerous to list in this note), consult the concordance in Bricault 2005: 2.807–37. The figure of sixty-one inscriptions does not include three duplicate inscriptions and one dedication κατὰ πρόσταγμα τοῦ θεοῦ found in an inventory of offerings from the sanctuary of Apollo dated after 166 BCE (*IDélos* 1428, II, 48–50; 1450, A, 198). The following formulae were included: κατὰ πρόσταγμα; κατὰ πρόσταγμα τοῦ θεοῦ; κατὰ πρόσταγμα + divine name(s); κατὰ πρόσταγμα διὰ δνειροκρίτου. In order to focus on the πρόσταγμα formula, a few other variations were not included, but these five inscriptions do not fundamentally alter the picture: κατ' ἐπιταγήν: *IDélos* 2346 (to Apollo; post 166 BCE); καὶ ὄραμα: *IDélos* 2114 (to Isis; 148/7 BCE); *IDélos* 2115 (divinity unknown; found in Serapieion C; post 166 BCE); *IDélos* 2412 (to Zeus; post 166 BCE); κατ' ὄνειρον: *IDélos* 2448 (to Heka[te] So[teira], Agathe Tyche; post 166 BCE).

control resumes. From 314 to 166 BCE, however, there is not a single decree formula in 180 dedications to Greek divinities. Clearly, the picture changes under the Athenian domination, when Syrian and Near Eastern cults arrive, and divine decrees find a limited place in the epigraphy of Greek cults. The proportion of commands in Syrian inscriptions after 166 is, of course, the same as the total above: 8.41% (9/107). With the pre-166 inscriptions excluded, the percentage of dedications to Greek gods according to divine command rises slightly to 1.91% (14/734). The biggest change, however, occurs in the epigraphical practices of Egyptian cult. The proportion of command inscriptions falls from 35.71% to only 11.11% (18/162). This difference is related to fundamental changes in the character of the largest sanctuary (Sarapieion C) after it came under official Athenian control, a development I shall discuss later in the chapter. During the period of Delian independence, the period of Apollonios' inscription, the epigraphical practice of presenting offerings, dedications, and temple foundations as directed by divine commands (προστάγματα) was a clear distinguishing feature of the cult of Egyptian gods on Delos.

The numerous attestations of this formula, both on Delos and elsewhere around the Mediterranean, show that the motif of divine commands had a broad currency among those involved in Egyptian cult, and parallels to Apollonios' narrative are found in other texts dealing with the foundation of Sarapis sanctuaries in the Greek world. The pattern of repeated dream oracles, initial delay or resistance on the part of the dreamer or his opponents, and divine commands ultimately leading to the establishment of a sanctuary is attested in two other well-known examples. An inscription from Thessaloniki records a copy of an older text, possibly of the third century BCE, detailing the foundation of the Sarapis cult in Opous (in Opuntian Locris).⁷⁸ In this story, the god's command is put in writing. A certain Xenainetos had a dream that Sarapis ordered (ἐπιτάξει) him to proclaim to one of his political opponents that Sarapis and Isis must be received in Opous, and that he would put a letter under his pillow to that effect. When he had the dream a second time, Xenainetos awoke to find that the letter was actually there.⁷⁹ He took the letter to Opous and the cult was established. Apollonios' discovery of a "little papyrus" (βιβλίδιον) advertising the plot of land on which he would build the sanctuary serves a

⁷⁸ *IG* X.2 255 (= *RICIS* 113/0536). This date for the original text is the opinion of the editor, C. Edson. See also Sokolowski 1974; Totti 1985: 34–35; Bricault 1997: 118.

⁷⁹ This account does not use πρόσταγμα or related verbs, but the vocabulary of command is present: ἔδοξε καθ' ὕπνον . . . Σάραπιν ἐπιτάξει (lines 3–4); ἀνήγγειλε τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιταχθέντα (line 12).

function similar to the letter from Sarapis in the Thessaloniki inscription.⁸⁰ Divine commands in dreams also figure in a letter from a certain Zoilos, preserved among the papyri of the Zenon archive from Ptolemaic Egypt.⁸¹ In 257 BCE, Zoilos sought the support of Apollonios, the *dioiketēs* of Egypt under Ptolemy Philadelphus, in order to complete construction of a Sarapieion in some coastal city, perhaps Aspendos in Pamphylia. In his letter, he tells of orders (προστάγματα) given by Sarapis in a dream, and an illness that resulted from his initial neglect of divine will.⁸² The ultimate success of Zoilos' endeavor is unknown, but the letter shows that dream injunctions served more than a retrospective function in describing the foundations of a Sarapieion. They were actually part of the process of mobilizing support for the foundation.

A major parallel to this narrative of dream command and cult foundation is, of course, found in the stories from Plutarch and Tacitus discussed earlier, which are often treated (anachronistically) as the sources of the tradition, since they tell of the beginnings of the Greek cult of Sarapis at Alexandria.⁸³ Tacitus and Plutarch are much later, but their foundation stories do share motifs with those discussed above, and may therefore have had the same antecedents. In one respect, however, they are different: in Plutarch and Tacitus, the dreamer who receives the god's commands is the Egyptian king.⁸⁴ The difference is primarily a function of the Egyptian context, in which the pharaoh played a more central ideological role in temple foundations and other religious activities. This can be seen in a κατὰ πρόσταγμα inscription on a bilingual foundation plaque from the Alexandrian Sarapieion, in which Ptolemy IV (222/1–204 BCE) dedicated a small temple to Harpocrates “according to a decree of Sarapis and Isis” (κατὰ πρόσταγμα Σαράπιδος καὶ Ἰσιδος | *m wd Wsr-Hr hr S.t*).⁸⁵ It is

⁸⁰ See Sokolowski 1974: 443, though his notion that the advertisement was “hidden in the frame of the door” stretches the Greek. These written messages are perhaps reminiscent of oracular procedures in Egypt, such as ticket oracles or letters to the dead or to a god.

⁸¹ *P. Cair. Zen.* 59034; see also Totti 1985: 160–62.

⁸² Sarapis' commands parallel those of the inscriptions discussed above: προσευξάμενος δ[ὲ] αὐ[τῷ], ἐξ[μ]ε | ὑγιάνθη, διότι ὑπομενῶ τὴν ληιτο[υρ]χίαν καὶ ποιή[σει]ν τὸ ὑφ' αὐτοῦ | προστασσόμενον (lines 10–12); καλῶς οὖν ἔχει, Ἀπολλώνιε, ἐπακολουθήσαι σε τοῖς ὑπὸ τοῦ | θεοῦ προστάγμασιν (lines 18–19). This example is discussed by Lenger 1970: 257.

⁸³ See the discussion of Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000 above.

⁸⁴ In these stories, the divine command is also evident. See Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 28 (*Mor.* 361f): Πτολεμαῖος δ' ὁ Σωτὴρ ὄναρ εἶδε τὸν ἐν Σινώπῃ τοῦ Πλούτωνος κολοσσόν . . . κελεύοντα κομίσει τὴν ταχίστην αὐτὸν εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν. In Tacitus, the king at first sees a youth who warns him, but later turns to commands (*iussa*) for both Ptolemy and Scythrothemis (Tac. *Hist.* 4.83.3; 4.84.2).

⁸⁵ *IAlex. Ptol.* 21 (= *SB* 9300). The hieroglyphic portion was written with a cryptographic system, but was deciphered by É. Drioton. See Drioton 1946: 108–9. In another text from somewhere in Egypt (*SB* 8954 = Robert, *Collection Froehner* 71), an unspecified dedication is made “on behalf of” (ὑπέρ) Ptolemy I Soter.

not clear from this brief text how the command was delivered, but dreams figured prominently in the religious landscape of the Memphite Sarapieion (at Saqqara), the Egyptian home of *Wsir-Hp*. A third-century BCE stele from Saqqara advertised a Cretan dream interpreter, who had a command from the god (τοῦ θεοῦ πρόσταγμα ἔχων), presumably allowing him to pursue his trade.⁸⁶ The painting of the Apis bull on the stele suggests that the god is none other than Sarapis/*Wsir-Hp*. Records of dreams are prominent in the bilingual archive of Ptolemaios, son of Glaukias, a *katochos* in the Sarapieion, and in the Demotic archive of the priest Ḥor of Sebennytyos, who served in the ibis cult there and presented one of his prophetic dream visions to Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II in 168 BCE.⁸⁷ Given the importance of dreams in the cult of Sarapis in Ptolemaic Memphis, it seems a plausible conjecture that Ptolemy IV or someone else, perhaps a priest like Ḥor, had a dream in which a divine decree stipulated the construction of the Harpocrates temple in the enclosure of the Alexandrian Sarapieion.

The logic of divine dream commands in the Egyptian context becomes much clearer in another narrative – one preserved among the papyri from the Memphite Sarapieion just mentioned. The *Dream of Nectanebo*, which I discussed in the previous chapter, is the beginning of a story written in Greek in the hand of Ptolemaios' younger brother Apollonios, but translated from Demotic.⁸⁸ This text manipulates conventional Egyptian

⁸⁶ SB 685 = IMEG 112.

⁸⁷ See esp. UPZ 77–80. On dreams in the archive of Ptolemaios, son of Glaukias, see Thompson 1988: 224–25, 247–48, 262–65. It is interesting to note that Ptolemaios, in a petition to Ptolemy VI Philometor on behalf of Taous and Thauas, strengthened his case by saying that he was helping the twins κατὰ πρόσταγμα τοῦ θεοῦ (UPZ 20.27, dated 163 BCE). See Thompson 1988: 234–35. Among Ḥor's dreams was one that predicted the preservation of Alexandria from Antiochus IV at the end of the Sixth Syrian War. Multiple drafts of a letter to the court at Alexandria include Ḥor's description of his successful prophecy, and the priest actually met with Ptolemy VI Philometor and Cleopatra II on 29 August 168 BCE. See Ray 1976: 123–24, texts 1–4. See also Thompson 1988: 138. Related to the Memphite milieu, though at the end of the Ptolemaic period, is the dream oracle of Psherenptah on the stele of Taimhotep (British Museum 147; translated by Lichtheim 1980: 59–65), in which Imhotep promises the birth of a male child in return for some great work in the sanctuary of Ankhatawi. This stele dates to the reign of Cleopatra VII, and reflects the extraordinary prestige that the high priests of Ptah at Memphis enjoyed and their close association with the Ptolemies. See Thompson 1988: 138–54.

⁸⁸ UPZ I 81. See Koenen 1985: 176–83 for a text with regularized spellings. In what follows, I have quoted from the latter. Apollonios, who may have had the Egyptian name Peteharenpi (Clarysse and Vandrope 2006: 10 n. 23), was bilingual in Greek and Demotic, and may have translated the text himself. A marvelous exploration of the mixed cultural world of the sons of Glaukias is the chapter on this family in Thompson 1988: 212–65. See Ryholt 1998; 2002 for the Demotic versions of the Nectanebo story. A brief Demotic text preserves the beginning of another story, set at Memphis, which may have explored similar ideas. In this text, the king goes to the burial chamber of the Apis bull, and has a dream in which a great man urges him not to neglect various religious duties,

narrative patterns to show the disastrous consequences of a breakdown in the chain of command from god to king to priest. The original frame of the story was a letter to the king from the hieroglyphist Petesios, ominously dated to the sixteenth year of Nectanebo's rule, the year that Artaxerxes III would begin a second, ultimately successful campaign against Egypt. In the part that is preserved in the Greek text, Nectanebo visits Memphis to obtain a revelation of his present circumstances. He has a dream, in which he sees Isis and all the other gods of Egypt in a papyrus boat docked at Memphis. Isis, the queen of the gods (θεῶν ἄνασσαν Ἴσιν), is seated on a great throne, holding court.⁸⁹ Onuris, equated with the Greek Ares, supplicates Isis and lodges a complaint with her against Nectanebo. He says that he has watched over the land as Isis ordered (καθότι προσέταξας – *UPZ* 81.ii.20), and though he has looked after Nectanebo (who was established by Isis in his rule) the king has been neglectful of his temple, and has resisted the god's commands (τοῖς ἑμοῖς προστάγμασιν ἀντιπέπτωκεν – *UPZ* 81.iii.5–6). Isis makes no reply, but as soon as Nectanebo wakes up, he attempts to remedy the situation by issuing a series of commands (the language echoes the commands of the gods).⁹⁰ Inquiries are made, and he discovers that work on hieroglyphic inscriptions at the temple of Onuris has been left unfinished. He orders that letters be written to all the notable temples in the land concerning hieroglyph-carvers, and finds that Petesios is the best among them. He assigns the job to Petesios, and pays him a large sum to get the job done as quickly as possible. As the Greek text breaks off, however, Petesios goes in search of wine and sees a beautiful girl. Things look bad for Nectanebo at that point, and later in the story, in a fragment preserved only in Demotic, something terrible has happened to Petesios in the temple of Sebennytos, and the coming foreign invasion has been revealed to Nectanebo.⁹¹ Failure to follow divine commands has caused misfortune for the priest, the king, and all of Egypt.

The Egyptian pattern that the Nectanebo story subverts is the same pattern that provides the ideological foundations for the Sarapis narratives in Plutarch and Tacitus, and for the story of Apollonios and his ancestors.

including attending the processions of Isis, erecting the Djed pillar at Busiris, and visiting temples. See Spiegelberg 1912a, 1913.

⁸⁹ Ryholt 2002: 226 notes that the phrase describing the gods to the left and to the right of Isis translates a Demotic formula found in scenes describing an earthly or divine royal court.

⁹⁰ *UPZ* 81.iii.12: προσέταξεν κατὰ σπουδὴν ἀποστείλαι . . . ; iv.1–2: προσέταξεν κατὰ σπουδὴν γράψαι εἰς τὸ λόγι[σ]μα | ἱερὰ . . . ; iv.15–16: τὰ προδεδηλωμένα ἔργα τάξας αὐτῷ . . . Though these sections are not preserved in the Demotic text, the pattern of royal commands can be seen in *P. Carlsb.* 424, 499, 559, i.e. the Demotic “sequel” discussed by Ryholt 2002, 228–32 (ll. 7–9 all begin with the phrase *ḥn=i r gm* . . . “I have given an order to find . . .”).

⁹¹ See Ryholt 2002: 229–30.

In its traditional form, this pattern is a type of *Königsnovelle*, a common literary frame, in which the royal court serves as the context for the reports of priests and officials, the pharaoh's deliberations, his decisions, and their fulfillment through royal commands or action.⁹² A prominent motif of the *Königsnovelle* is the dream oracle, which informs and motivates the king's actions. Dream oracles presented in this literary form are found as early as the Middle Kingdom and continue into the Ptolemaic period. The majority are concerned with one of two major themes of pharaonic ideology: the king's role as conqueror of Egypt's enemies, and as builder and restorer of temples and religious monuments. In some texts, the god appears to the king in order to urge him on to battle, or to predict victory, as in the Memphis stele of Amenhotep II (18th Dynasty, 1425–1401 BCE) and the lengthy inscription of Merneptah (19th Dynasty, 1212–1202 BCE) at Luxor.⁹³ In other dream revelations, the god complains of neglect of his earthly abode or image, and the king is instructed to carry out some benefaction of building or restoration. In the earliest known example, a divinity (probably Satis) appears to Sesostri I (12th Dynasty, 1971–1928 BCE) in a dream vision, and demands that the king care for a temple at Elephantine. The Sphinx Stele of the future Thutmose IV (1421–1413 BCE) relates a dream in which the god Harmakhis asked the prince to restore his image (the sphinx at Giza) and clear it of sand.⁹⁴ Such texts were the classical Egyptian forerunners of a type of literature that continued into the Ptolemaic period. The later divine dream revelations also seem to pursue the military and religious preoccupations of pharaonic kingship ideology. The trilingual Raphia decree of 217 BCE proclaims that all the gods of Egypt revealed themselves to Ptolemy IV Philopator in a dream, and predicted that he would prevail over Antiochus III in the Fourth Syrian War.⁹⁵ Divine

⁹² The fundamental work on this genre is Hermann 1938, who included Tacitus' version of the story among his examples (59–61). See further Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 51–53; Thissen 1966: 52–53 gives a convenient list of examples. Note that there are some texts that report the dream revelations of private individuals. See Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000: 52, nn. 61–64. For debates over the term and its definition, see n. 134 in the previous chapter on Manetho and also Ryholt 2002: 239.

⁹³ The Memphite stele records a dream vision in which Amun encourages Amenhotep II before one of the battles of his third Syrian campaign. In the Luxor inscription, Merneptah has a dream that Ptah hands him a sword and exhorts him to go forth and fight Libyan invaders. Dream of Amenhotep II: *Urk* IV.1306.12–1307.2; Der Manuelian 1987: 70–71, translation 222–27. Dream of Merneptah: Kitchen 1982: 5, ll. 10–15. Cf. the stele of Tanutamun (*Urk*. III, 61, 4–62, 7), in which the king records that prior to his conquest of Egypt, he had a dream with enigmatic signs, which (once interpreted for him) predicted his rule over the two lands.

⁹⁴ *Urk*. IV.1539–44. See also Zivie 1976: 125–45.

⁹⁵ Line 9: *kṛp=w st r-r=f ṣs=w n=f ḏ=w n=f w3ḥ n rsw(t)* – “they revealed themselves to him, called to him, and gave him an oracle in dream” (trans. Simpson 1996: 245). Note that the gods of Egypt are also said to have accompanied him to Raphia, “guiding him” (*ḥw=w t n=f myt*). Thissen 1966: 13, 51–53. The section relating the dream does not survive in Greek.

dream oracles instructing a king to care for some neglected cult place or object also occur in various forms in Late Period and Ptolemaic Egyptian literature. The “Famine Stele,” a pseudonymous hieroglyphic inscription created in the Ptolemaic period by Egyptian priests at Elephantine, makes use of a divine dream oracle in a text intended to promote claims to revenue on behalf of the temple of Khnum.⁹⁶ In this inscription, the 3rd Dynasty pharaoh Djoser, faced with famine in Egypt as a result of repeated failures of the Nile flood, directs priests to inquire about the sources of the flood. He eventually seeks a dream oracle through incubation and Khnum appears to him, promising the return of the Nile flood in exchange for revenues, in particular various minerals and stones for building and restoring temples and adorning statues.⁹⁷ The text concludes with the king’s decree outlining the donation to Khnum.⁹⁸

The presence or absence of the pharaoh, however, distinguishes dream oracles set in the literary frame of the Egyptian *Königsnovelle*, including the Plutarch and Tacitus narratives, from the stories of Sarapis foundations outside of Egypt. There are two straightforward reasons for this. First, the Ptolemaic dynasty took no direct role in promoting the cult of Egyptian gods outside of Egypt.⁹⁹ In the islands and around the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, the Ptolemies devoted their munificence primarily to cults of Greek divinities and dynastic festivals based on Greek models.¹⁰⁰ A second, closely related reason is that the articulation of Ptolemaic power and legitimacy in the language of pharaonic kingship was not nearly as relevant to social and political contexts outside of Egypt. The shared motif of dream oracles and divine demands for cult honors persists in foundation stories, but the king has been removed from the chain of command, and

⁹⁶ Scholars have dated the Famine Stele to the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–180 BCE) and, most recently, to the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–164 BCE), but dates earlier and later in the Ptolemaic period have also been proposed. For a brief overview, see Winter 1988: 231.

⁹⁷ English translation by Robert Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 386–91; see esp. col. 19: “I have dispatched to you gemstones, [that had not been found] previously and with which no work had been done to build temples, to renew ruins, or to inlay both parts of a statue’s eyes” (wḏ.n.i n.k ʕ.wt hr ʕ.wt [...] dr(?) nn ir k.t im.sn iw k.t ḥ.wt-ntr.w r smw̄wy w̄s.w r ʕb it̄r.ty ir̄.ty n nb.f. . .).

⁹⁸ Cf. the Bentresh stele, a monument purporting to belong to Rameses II, but dating to the Persian or Ptolemaic period, in which the prince of Bakhtan is sent a threatening dream when he contrives to keep the statue of Khons-the-Provider (*pi-ir-sḥr*), a manifestation of Khons at Karnak. As a result of the dream, he restores the statue to Egypt, accompanied with opulent gifts. English translation by Robert Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 361–66.

⁹⁹ The latter point was decisively argued by Fraser 1960. See above, pp. 148–49.

¹⁰⁰ The contrast is apparent in the evidence from Delos. There is only one inscription related to the Egyptian gods that mentions a Ptolemaic king (*CE* 171 = *RICIS* 202/0338), and this occurs very late: a dedication made on behalf of Ptolemy IX Soter II ca. 88 BCE. For the other Ptolemaic dedications and foundations there, see Bruneau 1970: 516–45. In general, see also Hölbl 2001: 94, 96, 98. See also below.

the god sends a dream directly to a priest or private devotee. A comparable differentiation in the role of Sarapis' consort, Isis, is evident in hymns and aretalogies within and outside Egypt. A recent study of the image of Isis in Greek and Demotic texts has shown that while both sets of texts emphasize her royal characteristics as a divine queen, the references to specific support for the ruling dynasty found in texts within Egypt are absent in the aretalogies from Andros, Kyme, Thessaloniki, and Ios.¹⁰¹ Sarapis, the other half of the divine ruling couple, follows a similar pattern. Within Egypt, especially in the third century BCE, Sarapis was closely associated with the Ptolemies through both official foundations and private dedications as a divine supporter of the dynasty.¹⁰² Outside Egypt, Sarapis retained his royal persona, but maintenance of the cult and sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods was generally not mediated through the king in his idealized role as primary patron.¹⁰³ The dream narratives, therefore, center on the priest or private devotee. Rather than the dedicant acting on behalf of the king, or in obedience to a royal command, the roles of king and god are collapsed into one, and a dedicant or builder of a sanctuary acts on an order received directly from the god.¹⁰⁴

In the case of Apollonios, the argument can go one step further. The priests' story uses a discourse of divine commands current in Egyptian cult,

¹⁰¹ Dousa 2002: 159–68.

¹⁰² See Fraser 1960: 5–6, 11–12, 17–18; Fraser 1967; Stambaugh 1972: 22–26, 40, 90, 94. Ptolemy IV in the Raphia decree and other documents credited his victory at Raphia to Sarapis and Isis. See Bricault 1999.

¹⁰³ The only significant exception may be the few cases in which private dedications are made to the Egyptian gods “on behalf of” (ὑπέρ) a Ptolemy. Such inscriptions are found in areas of Ptolemaic control or influence and also within Egypt, and one possible interpretation is that the dedicators presented themselves as acting in the place of the king, the true dedicator. For discussion of the formula as a phenomenon particular to Greek epigraphy in Egypt, see Bingen 1989: 30–32. A dedication from Halicarnassus to Sarapis, Isis, and Arsinoe II was made on behalf of Ptolemy II (*RICIS* 305/1702). From Thera, site of an important Ptolemaic garrison, come dedications on behalf of Ptolemy III (*RICIS* 202/1204) and Ptolemy IV (*RICIS* 202/1205), though these examples are doubtful owing to heavy restoration. A dedication from Methana, also a Ptolemaic garrison, was made to the “great gods” (Sarapis and Isis?) on behalf of Ptolemy VI and his wife (*RICIS* 102/0501). See also *CE* 171 (= *RICIS* 202/0338) mentioned above. A few (more indirect) connections may also be mentioned here. On Thera, there was an association of *Basilistai* involved in the royal cult of the Ptolemies who also made dedications to Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis (*RICIS* 202/1202). From Cyprus comes a joint dedication to Sarapis together with Ptolemy III and Berenike (*RICIS* 401/0101). A mercenary in Ptolemaic service made dedications to Sarapis and Isis at Gortyn and mentioned the royal house (*RICIS* 203/0601–0602).

¹⁰⁴ This pattern can also be found in an Egyptian context. In the absence of a strong pharaonic figure, the god becomes the guarantor of office, and issuer of commands. For example, Djedhor the savior, who lived in the troubled times from the end of Dynasty 30 to the beginning of Macedonian rule, receives commands from the god (see above n. 75). Though his predecessors were appointed to their offices by the king, Petosiris of Hermopolis was chosen by Thoth himself during the second Persian occupation (Tomb of Petosiris, inscription 81, lines 24–25, as discussed by Gorre 2009a: 178, 192).

but the repeated episodes of obedience to these commands are embedded in a narrative of sons succeeding to the office of their fathers. Sarapis' interventions on behalf of this family of priests demonstrate that their piety and obedience have merited divine support for their "dynasty."¹⁰⁵ Isis and Sarapis, through their connections to the Osirian cycle of Egyptian myths, are normally guarantors of royal dynastic continuity, but in this case they figure as the backers of a lineage of priests. This mythical pattern of legitimation is evoked more directly in the most central event of the narrative: the trial.

THE TRIAL

The trial was undoubtedly a real and significant moment in the history of Apollonios' sanctuary, but by choosing to celebrate this event and to put it at the center of an elaborate commemorative text and hymn, Apollonios II was also evoking the most canonical of Egyptian mythical cycles: the struggle between Horus and Seth over succession to the throne of Osiris.¹⁰⁶ One of the final episodes of this cycle, a great trial which finally decides the conflict in favor of Horus, would have served from an Egyptian perspective as a mythical paradigm for Apollonios' victory. The connection between this mythical antecedent and the historical event is made in part through the physical form of the text. A pillar was an uncommon object on which to inscribe a Greek text on Delos, and its curved surface could hardly be described as convenient for engraving a long hymn.¹⁰⁷ This unusual choice, however, can be understood as an appeal to the Egyptian symbolism of the Djed-pillar. The ritual of erecting the Djed (*Dd*) was an annual event included in Egyptian temple calendars dating from the New Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods. This ritual episode took place on the last day of the ten-day Osiris festival held from the 21st to the 30th of the Egyptian month Khoiak, and in this context, the rite was equated with the resurrection of Osiris, and his ultimate triumph over his enemies.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ The notion of divine support for the pious is spelled out early in the hymn (ll. 33–34): ἐσθλοῖσιν δὲ σωώτορες αἰὲν ἔπεισθε | ἀνδράσιν οἱ κατὰ πάντα νόμῳ ὅσια φρονέουσιν.

¹⁰⁶ This was argued by Engelmann 1975: 2, 23–24, 44. Baslez 1996: 42 n. 21 objects to this interpretation, and indeed to any Egyptian dimension to this text. Siard 1998: 478 is more willing to accept this notion as a "second level" reading of the text.

¹⁰⁷ There are a few other known examples of inscribed pillars associated with the cult of the Egyptian gods in the Graeco-Roman world outside Egypt. See *RICIS* 101/0401, 202/0349, 203/0301, 304/0608, 501/0134, 501/0145, 501/0150.

¹⁰⁸ See Van De Walle 1954: 287–90; for references to calendars at the temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu, and at Ptolemaic and Roman period temples at Edfu, Denderah and Esna, see especially 288, nn. 1–4. The texts inscribed on the temple of Hathor at Denderah pertaining to the festival of Osiris in the month of Khoiak have been treated extensively by Chassinat 1966–68. On the erection of the Djed-pillar on the last day of Khoiak, see *ibid.*, 1.73, 260, 2.695–705, 756–57.

This link to Osirian ritual and symbolism is unproblematic, since Sarapis, as the Memphite god *Wsir-Ḥp* (the Osiris of the Apis bull), frequently assumed the role of Osiris.¹⁰⁹ Aside from its symbolism of resurrection and victory, the Djed-pillar also marked Horus' succession as the legitimate heir to Osiris, and with this meaning the rite could be enacted not only in the annual Osirian festival, but also during the coronation of the pharaoh and in the Heb-sed (*hb-sd*) or royal jubilee, as part of a ritual drama that assimilated the king to the mythical role of Horus as successor to Osiris.¹¹⁰

The assimilation of the trial to the mythical struggle of Horus and Seth is facilitated by the personal names of the priestly lineage and the characterization of their opponents. The name Apollonios is, of course, derived from Apollo, the Greek god equated with Egyptian Horus. And since Demeter was commonly understood as a Greek equivalent to Isis, the name Demetrios could be understood as "belonging to Isis," again evoking Horus, the son of Isis. The depiction of Apollonios' opponents at law furthers this analogy by giving them the basic characteristics of Seth: they are rebellious, evil, envious, and filled with rage. The prose section uses the language of conspiracy and insurrection: "certain men banded together against us and against the god" (ἀνθρώπων δέ τινων ἐπισυνστάντων | ἡμῖν τε καὶ τῷ θεῷ – ll. 23–24). This rebellious conspiracy against the god recalls Seth and his confederates, who rebelled against Osiris.¹¹¹ Maiistas is more colorful (ll. 66–68):

καὶ τότε δὴ ῥα κακοῖσι κακὸς Φθόνος ἐνβαλε λύσσαν
ἀνδράσιν οἱ ῥα δίκηι ἀνεμωλίῳ ἐκλήϊσαν
δοιῶ σὸν θεράποντα, κακὸν δ'ἐπὶ θεσμὸν ἔτευχον . . .

And then indeed wicked Envy cast rage among wicked men,
who with a windy double lawsuit
summoned your servant, and prepared an evil decree . . .

The anonymous opponents are evil men, whom Envy has filled with raging madness (λύσσα). Such rage is typical of the Egyptian depiction of Seth,

¹⁰⁹ See Stambaugh 1972: 36–72.

¹¹⁰ A visual depiction of this rite being performed at the third Heb-sed festival of Amenhotep III occurs in the Tomb of Kheruef at Thebes. See Fakhry 1943: 477–79 and pl. XXXIX. In general, see Van De Walle 1954: 287, 290, 293–97; and also *LdÄ* s.v. "Djed-Pfeiler" for further references. As Koenen 1993 has shown, the Ptolemies certainly continued the connection between the Osirian festival at the end of Khoiak and the royal coronation ritual, by arranging the latter to coincide with the former. One of the priestly titles of Pasherenptah, the high priest of Memphis, suggests that the royal succession symbolism of the Djed-pillar was also kept alive throughout the Ptolemaic period. He was known as "the second after the king at the erection of the Djed-pillar." British Museum stelai 147 and 886. For English translation of BM 147 see Lichtheim 1980: 61. See Van De Walle 1954: 292.

¹¹¹ See Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 13 and the discussion of Engelmann 1975: 23.

who was identified as the master of the storm.¹¹² In Plutarch's version of the Osiris myth, which is drawn from Egyptian sources and is the most complete to survive in any form, Seth is likewise motivated by envy, filled with madness, and then made to pay the price.¹¹³ In Maiistas, the wicked men summoned Apollonios with "a windy lawsuit" (δίκηι ἀνεμωλίωι). Ἀνεμώλιος is a Homeric word used several times to describe worthless, empty, or false speech, but it also provides appropriate Sethian imagery, since the opponent of Osiris and Horus was equated through *interpretatio Graeca* with Typhon, who in Hesiod was the father of the storm-winds.¹¹⁴ These allusions, along with the anonymity of the accusers and the indeterminacy of the legal issues at stake, allowed the authors of the text to cast the real events of the trial as recapitulations of a paradigmatic mythical episode.

The mythical tradition on the trial of Horus and Seth is heterogeneous, but the dispute between the two gods always centers on succession to the rule of Egypt, which had been held by Osiris. In most versions Horus is the son, while Seth, the false claimant, is Osiris' brother, and in the two best-preserved Egyptian texts containing an account of the trial, the case is ultimately decided by a direct patrilineal ancestor who effectively appoints his heir. *P. Chester Beatty I*, dated to the reign of Rameses V (ca. 1148–1144 BCE), contains the longest version of this myth: a series of trials and struggles which are finally decided when an appeal is made to Osiris, who argues on behalf of his son in a letter from the underworld sent to Pre-Harakhti, the presiding god at the tribunal.¹¹⁵ A later version, part of the *Shabaka Stone* (dated ca. 710 BCE), has Geb, Horus' grandfather, deciding the case between Horus and Seth, and he appoints the son of his son as the legitimate heir.¹¹⁶ Sarapis' miraculous intervention in the trial on Delos thus alludes to the basic structure of the two most complete

¹¹² See above, [Chapter 2](#), n. 125.

¹¹³ Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 27: δεινὰ μὲν ὑπὸ φθόνου καὶ δυσμενείας εἰργάσατο, καὶ πάντα πράγματα παράξας ἐνέπλησε κακῶν γῆν ὁμοῦ τε πᾶσαν καὶ θάλατταν, εἶτα δίκην ἔδωκεν. ἡ δὲ τιμωρὸς Ὀσίριδος ἀδελφὴ καὶ γυνὴ τὴν Τυφῶνος σβέσασα καὶ καταπαύσασα μανίαν καὶ λύτταν. . . . See further the discussion of Engelman 1975: 44.

¹¹⁴ Hes. *Theog.* 869–80. West 1966: 379 argues that although ancient authors commonly thought Typhon a god of storm winds, this was a secondary association (but early enough to appear in Hesiod). See also above, pp. 118–20.

¹¹⁵ Text, commentary and translation in Broze 1996. For an English translation, see Lichtheim 1976: 214–23.

¹¹⁶ British Museum No. 498 (*Shabaka Stone*): 7–18b. For an English translation, see Lichtheim 1973: 52–53, though note Junge 1973, who disputes the dating of the "ancient" text. Much later, Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 19, 54 (*Mor.* 358d–e, 373b) makes reference to this trial as a case that concerned the legitimacy of Horus, though in his version, Horus is assisted by Hermes. In *P. Chester Beatty I*, Thoth also seems to be on the side of Horus.

Egyptian versions of the myth. Apollonios becomes a Horus-figure, aided by Sarapis-Osiris at the moment of the trial.

In this brief comparison of the Delian trial to the legal contest between Horus and Seth, I have used the most complete surviving Egyptian versions, which are much earlier than the Delian text. There is, nevertheless, solid evidence that the trial continued to be an important motif in the literary tradition of the Horus–Seth conflict into the Hellenistic period and beyond.¹¹⁷ An unpublished fourth-century BCE papyrus from Saqqara contains fragments of the “Contendings of Horus and Seth,” in which the most prominent episode concerns a judgment made by Re and carried out by Thoth. The judgment assigns Lower Egypt to Horus, and Upper Egypt to Seth, but in what remains of the text, Isis disputes this result and only recognizes Horus as the rightful heir.¹¹⁸ Perhaps further legal action followed in this version of the story. An important, newly published Demotic papyrus contains a fragmentary script for the dramatic performance of episodes from the conflict of Horus and Seth. The papyrus has been dated to 146 BCE, and originated in the Fayyum. Autobiographical comments suggest that the author, probably a priest, participated in a performance of the drama in the context of the Khoiak festival discussed above. The text is quite fragmentary, but in this sketchy narrative, the author refers to various actions he performed, including the following: “I caused Seth to be guilty. I gave Maat (= justice/right) to ‘Horus’ . . . I put Se’t’h’ in prison . . . I caused them to ‘judg’[e] . . . I gave Egypt to Horus.”¹¹⁹ This first-person outline by an actor who played a role in the performance suggests that a trial between Horus and Seth was part of a drama in which kingship was conferred on Horus. Since such performances would most likely have been staged before both priests and non-priests alike,¹²⁰ they could well have provided even a non-literate audience with a basic knowledge of the trial episode in the Horus–Seth legend. The litigation between Horus and Seth was also referred to as a paradigm for the judgment of the deceased in the afterlife in the Book of the Dead, which continued to be used into the Ptolemaic period.¹²¹ A first-century BCE Demotic papyrus and a Late Ptolemaic or early Roman hieroglyphic papyrus also make allusions to the trial,¹²² and it passed into wider Greek knowledge of Egyptian myth at least

¹¹⁷ For an overview of the sources related to the “Contendings of Horus and Seth” see Gaudard 2005: 2–9.

¹¹⁸ H. S. Smith 1974: 19 and 1975: 258; Tait 1994: 209–10.

¹¹⁹ *P. Berlin* 827c, ll. x + 4–x + 6 Gaudard 2005: 238–42. I would like to thank François Gaudard for drawing this to my attention.

¹²⁰ Gaudard 2005: 119–20. ¹²¹ Griffiths 1960: 54–65, 74–81.

¹²² Zauzich 1984; Vandier 1961: 106, 129 (= *P. Jumilhac* XVI.23–XVII.3).

by the time of Plutarch, who briefly describes a trial in which Seth–Typhon unsuccessfully accuses Horus of illegitimacy.¹²³ The story of Osiris and Isis and the conflict between Horus and Seth was the most widely known Egyptian mythical cycle in the Greek world, and would almost certainly be known to anyone involved in the cult of Egyptian divinities, whether Egyptian, Greek, or some other ethnicity.¹²⁴ The continuous literary tradition of trials between Horus and Seth suggests that an informed reader or hearer of Apollonios’ story could well have viewed the priest’s trial through the lens of the mythical episode. Indeed, the texts and the monument commemorating the trial appear to grant this license both by suppressing particular details of the actual event, and by assimilating the principals to their mythical counterparts.

This connection to Egyptian myth puts Apollonios II in the role of the legitimate claimant in a symbolic struggle over a disputed inheritance. Engelman argued that the connection between the two trials elevated the lawsuit on Delos to a mythical moral battlefield of good versus evil, and was intended to place the priest of Sarapis and his sanctuary on the side of justice and the gods. This certainly is a dimension of the myth and undoubtedly part of the monument’s rhetoric, but there is also a more specific significance in identifying Apollonios with Horus and his accusers with Seth. Whatever the actual issue at law, the trial is presented as if it were a vindication of Apollonios’ legitimate tenure of the priesthood he has inherited, a message in harmony with the genealogical pattern of the broader narrative and the repeated motif of obedience to divine decrees.

HELLENISM AND THE HYMN OF MAIISTAS

At the end of Apollonios’ prose version, a single line gives the author of the hymn that follows: “Maiistas also writes on behalf of the temple regarding this case” (γράφει δὲ καὶ Μαίιστας ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἱεροῦ εἰς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ταύτην). An interlinear space sets this section off from the rest of the inscription and the lines of Maiistas’ hymn also begin about one and a half or two letter-widths further to the left than the other lines. Even in the physical layout of the inscription, the second version is quite literally a

¹²³ Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 19.

¹²⁴ For the most important Greek discussions before Pausanias, see Hdt. 2.62–63, 2.144, 2.156 and Diod. Sic. 1.21.3, 1.25.6 (Hecataeus of Abdera was probably also aware of the cycle). For further non-Egyptian sources, see Gaudard 2005: 8–9. For a synoptic view of the multiple versions of the contendings of Horus and Seth, and a discussion of the pervasiveness of this mythical episode in Egyptian culture, see Assmann 2001: 134–41.

re-presentation of the history of the sanctuary, juxtaposed to the previous one. Set up in this way, the hymn of Maiistas invites the reader to compare it to the preceding prose text and to read the hymn for what it adds or changes, and how it reshapes the story.

The basic structure of the hymn's narrative, as I have outlined above, is very similar, though about twice as long and filled out with several details not in Apollonios' version: aside from specifying the elder Apollonios' Memphite origins, and elaborating the divine dream revelation concerning Demetrios' statue, Maiistas also recounts the fervent prayers of Demetrios and Apollonios II, which are not mentioned at all in the latter's prose narrative. To Engelmann, these prayers signaled a greater prominence in Maiistas' version of "the individual's aspiration and will" and the more equal footing of man and god. The hymn, in his opinion, would have been more comprehensible to the Greek resident of Delos than the account composed by the Egyptian priest in which the god alone appears to motivate events.¹²⁵ I pass over this contrast between "Greek" and "Egyptian" ideas about the relationship between the human and the divine worlds, and simply suggest that Sarapis is no less dominant in Maiistas' version than in that of Apollonios.¹²⁶ Indeed, the opening lines announce that the marvelous deeds (ἔργα) of Sarapis and of his consort Isis are at the core of the hymn (ll. 30–33). Though Maiistas' more fulsome accounts of the actors' subjective states do add to the human drama, the power of the divine is central to his hymnic, aretalogical narrative, especially in its presentation of the trial and the "miracle" of Sarapis' intervention.¹²⁷ As I have already mentioned, the magical paralysis that seizes Apollonios' accusers, rendering them mute and unable to argue their case, occurs only in the hymn, and this is the "miracle" (ἄρετή) that dazzles the varied population of Delos (ll. 90–91), and presumably also the ideal reader of the hymn.

Maiistas' version thus appears more consciously "aretalogical,"¹²⁸ but the most striking divergence from the preceding prose section lies in the poetical mode that Maiistas adopts in retelling Apollonios' shorter narrative of genealogy, divine commands, and trial at law. He Homerizes, which is to

¹²⁵ Engelmann 1975: 3, 36.

¹²⁶ In the oracle to Demetrios, the god, addressed in the second person, ordered (ἡνώγες) the priest to erect a statue. The first oracle to Apollonios, reported in direct discourse, begins with two imperatives ("Awake! Go . . ." – ἔγρεο· βαῖνε . . .).

¹²⁷ Cf. Wilhelm 1934: 9–10 who also briefly notes the apparent difference in emphasis between the two accounts: Apollonios shows more interest in the benefits performed for the sanctuary by the priestly lineage, with the help of the god; Maiistas' aretalogy is more geared to celebrating the power of the divinity.

¹²⁸ See the brief discussion of aretalogy in the introductory section of this chapter.

say that he Hellenizes. Maiistas translates the basic story told by Apollonios into dactylic hexameter verse and the vocabulary of Homeric epic, aligning his composition with the most fundamentally Greek poetical literature. But why? The usual answer connects the Hellenism of such texts to the presumed evangelical function of aretalogies: language and poetical form are part of the effort to propagate the cult of Egyptian gods, to make foreign divinities seem familiar and appealing to the Greek world. In the case of the Greek Isis aretalogies, this has been understood as part of an evolutionary process that begins with a basic translation of an Egyptian text originating in Memphis, and develops into more elaborate – and more Greek – poetical interpretations as the goddess is Hellenized to suit her new context.¹²⁹ The difficulty with this idea of progressive Hellenization is that those Isis aretalogies which most resemble a putative Egyptian original with their stichic self-predications in the voice of the goddess are actually later in date than the texts written in a Greek poetical idiom.¹³⁰ Rather than assuming that Greek poetical forms are part of an inevitable process of acculturation, it would be more prudent and more logical to consider the variations in form of the Isis aretalogies as a spectrum of coexistent options or strategies, and to interpret them in relation to their particular historical circumstances. In the column erected by Apollonios, which is earlier than any of the Isis aretalogies, two different approaches to the praise of Sarapis and Isis are displayed together in the same monument. And yet, evaluations of the poetical version of Apollonios' Egyptian discourses often assume that Maiistas' work was part of the same process of assimilation attributed to the Isis aretalogies.

In the appraisal of some scholars, however, this assimilation is incomplete or defective, and betrays traces of foreign origin or authorship. Robert Turcan described Maiistas' use of language and idiom drawn from

¹²⁹ See, e.g., Fowden 1986: 45–50. The Egyptian character of the Isis aretalogies, and their Memphite origin has been much debated (overviews in Smith 1971: 240–49; Grandjean 1975: 12–15; Fowden 1986: 46–48; Versnel 1998: 41–44; Dousa 2002: 149–51; Quack 2003b: 319–24). The initial case for Egyptian origins met with stiff resistance by those who saw the aretalogies as thoroughly Greek productions, but these arguments have been overcome by an accumulation of evidence for parallels in Egyptian hymns and other liturgical and mythical texts (see Harder 1944; Bergman 1968; Žabkar 1988; Quack 2003b).

¹³⁰ The inscriptions from Andros (*IG* XII.5 739 = Totti 1985: no. 2 / *RICIS* 202/1801) and Maroneia (Grandjean 1975 = *RICIS* 114/0202), which have been interpreted as more Greek in their form and outlook, date to the first century BCE and the late second/early first century BCE respectively, and are among the earliest texts related to this cluster of aretalogies. The Kyme (*IKyme* 41; *IG* XII Suppl. 14, pp. 98–99 = *RICIS* 302/0204), Thessaloniki (*IG* X.2 254 = *RICIS* 113/0545), and Ios (*IG* XII.5 14 = *RICIS* 202/1101) inscriptions, on the other hand, range in date from the first to third centuries CE.

the most canonical of all Greek literature as “distorting pseudo-Homeric imitations.”¹³¹ Engelmann shows some sympathy for a writer he considers a Greek-as-a-second-language poet. “There is something touching about his verses,” he writes, “clearly versification did not come easily to him. Although he had read Homer [and other poets] . . . the Greek language of poetry remained unfamiliar to him. . . . He was evidently unaware that the poetic style of the Homeric epic was not suited to his subject.”¹³² Since he is not otherwise attested in the inscriptions from Delos, nothing is known about Maiistas, but his name has suggested to some an Egyptian, or at least non-Greek, identity.¹³³ These evaluations of his poetry, in other words, paint a portrait of a partially Hellenized barbarian who mimics Greek culture, but can’t quite get it right. This idea of Maiistas’ hymn as mimic Hellenism should arouse suspicion; it is a rather tendentious way of differentiating the quality of the poetry and the identity of the poet. In the colonial context, as Homi Bhabha has incisively observed, the discourse of mimicry is always ambivalent, manifesting the narcissistic desire for a reformed, imitative colonial Other, and at the same time differentiating that Other as “almost the same, but not quite.”¹³⁴ Colonial mimicry must always produce marks of difference (often exaggerated) in the imagination of the colonizing power, manifestations of an anxiety over threats posed by hybridity. Given the colonial ideologies often implicit in the relationships between cultures in *Hellenismus*, it is not surprising that the discourse of mimicry has found its way into scholarly strategies for evaluating the quality or the “authenticity” of Hellenistic syncretisms. Phenomena like the poetry of Maiistas are taken both as evidence for the “Hellenization” of Egyptian cult, and as evidence for the compromised, hybrid status of the resulting Hellenism.¹³⁵

¹³¹ Turcan 1976–77: 238–39: “imitations pseudo-homériques et déformantes.”

¹³² Engelmann 1975: 25. Cf. Longo 1969: 111–12, who describes Maiistas as “maldestro omerida” and writes “L’ambizione letteraria di questi scritti è dimostrata nel nostro caso dalla scelta della forma poetica, dall’imitazione di Omero nel metro e nella lingua, dalle reminiscenze di altri poeti . . . dallo stile in generale inabile, ma pretenzioso.” Powell 1925: 71 also had a fairly low opinion of Maiistas’ verse, considering his dialect “poetic and artificial,” and accusing him of elaborate diction, forced expressions, too much embellishment, and mixing epic with more recent usage. Roussel 1915–16: 270 calls Maiistas “un dévot de bonne volonté, mais de médiocre talent.”

¹³³ The name is not attested elsewhere. Engelmann 1975: 25 notes a parallel in Σαῖστος, the name of a non-Greek, perhaps an Egyptian from Saïs, who dedicated altars to the Ptolemies (*IG* XII.1 33). “Maiistas” could transcribe an Egyptian name, but in the absence of any close parallels from Egyptian documents, such a reconstruction would be as speculative as an attempt to fix the ethnic identity of the poet on the basis of the name alone.

¹³⁴ Bhabha 1994: 85–92.

¹³⁵ For those who affirm the Greek character of Maiistas’ hymn, e.g. Baslez 1977: 148, it becomes evidence of the thorough “Hellenization” of the Egyptian cult.

The actual complaints about Maiistas' language are, however, relatively few, and in some cases based only on nebulous grounds of suitability or tastefulness.¹³⁶ There are one or two more serious charges of malapropism, but it is debatable whether they justify the conclusions drawn. Wilamowitz, for example, proposed that Maiistas mixed up ὄπιν ("divine wrath" or "religious reverence") with ὄπα ("voice") in lines 87–88, but the text is comprehensible without assuming that the poet has made an error.¹³⁷ Engelmann also argued that Maiistas confused the typical Homeric usages of αἰών "life" and μοῖρα "fate" in his poetical renderings of the deaths of Apollonios I and Demetrios (ll. 40–41, 46–47). These concepts were often closely related, however, so some license can be allowed.¹³⁸ If "versification

¹³⁶ Engelmann 1975: 39, commenting on lines 57–58, writes that "the epic style has an odd ring" when Maiistas describes the humble detail of the advertisement in the passageway. See also his comment on lines 61–62 (Engelmann 1975: 40). When Maiistas writes that the accusers "prepared an evil decree" (κακὸν δ' ἐπὶ θεσμὸν ἔτευχον), Engelmann 1975: 48 rightly notes that Maiistas was perhaps alluding to Hes. *Op.* 265, but then asserts that "A Greek of the early period would never have referred to an 'evil law', κακὸς θεσμός," but his point is unclear since there are certainly references to laws that are crooked in the sense of "unjust" (Hom. *Il.* 16.387: σκολιάς κρίνωσι θέμιστας; cf. Hes. *Op.* 221: σκολιῆς δὲ δίκης κρίνωσι θέμιστας).

¹³⁷ τῆς οὗτ' ὄπιν ἔκλεεν οὐθεῖς | οὔτε γ(ρ)άμμα δίκης ἐπιτάρροθον. Wilamowitz is cited without a complete reference by Roussel 1915–16: 82; Wilhelm 1934: 16; and Engelmann 1975: 54. This suggestion, however, required Wilhelm and Engelmann to interpret ἔκλεεν as an otherwise unattested form of κλύω. It seems possible, as Roussel suggested, to keep ὄπιν and to read ἔκλεεν as the imperfect of κλέω, just as it appears (cf. also Hermesianax fr. 7, l. 33 = Ath. 13.71). The phrase could thus be translated "whose religious reverence no one celebrated, nor its helping writ of law." Since ἐπιτάρροθον in Homer is always used of divine assistance, the poet seems to be emphasizing the accusers' lack of both divine support and religiosity (ὄπιν).

¹³⁸ Engelmann 1975: 30–31 notes that in Homer, *Aion* ("life" – not the later extended meaning "eternity") can leave someone (*Il.* 16.453), and *Moirai* can kill (*Il.* 16.849, 5.83), and that Maiistas has reversed these roles. He adds: "It is impossible to think that Aion (later 'eternity') could kill or that Moira could abandon a human being" (31). But as Vidal-Naquet 1966: 144 noted, Moira is closely associated with Aion in Eur. *Heracl.* 898–900: πολλὰ γὰρ τίκτει Μοῖρα τελεσιδῶταιρ' | Αἰὼν τε Χρόνου παῖς. There is also an Egyptian cluster of ideas concerning life, fate, and death which may help to explain this apparent reversal of Homeric idiom. Aion as the bounded or defined period of a lifetime may express the Egyptian concept of *Shai* (Demotic *šy/šy*), commonly translated as "fate," but also comprehending notions of one's lifetime, and conversely its appointed end. In the latter sense, *Shai* could be understood as hostile. On the semantic range of the term *šy*, see Quaegebeur 1975: 122–43, who discusses a number of texts revealing the negative side of this concept. As the negative aspect of the "time of life," *šy* even indicates death: "Dans un certain nombre de textes, le terme *Shai* s'applique manifestement à la mort, qui est d'ailleurs l'aspect négatif du temps de vie. Un exemple particulièrement clair nous est offert par une version thébaine sur ostracan du P. Anastasi I (vœux de santé et de prospérité à un ami; 19e dyn.): '(ta) Meskhénet et ta Renener resteront et dureront; le démon de la mort ne s'approchera pas de toi au moment de (où s'accomplira) ton *Shai*' (*msjn.t(=k) rnn.t=k mn wšh nn tkn tw hšyty m št šy=k*)." The goddess Renener may be behind the unusual expression (for Greek) λίπε μοῖρα. Renener/Renenutet (Thermouthis in Greek), often found in the company of *Shai*, was a goddess of nurturing, birth and fortune, who could be understood as a divinity that abided with an individual, overseeing his life and therefore serving to protect him. The departure of this goddess could thus be connected with death. See Quaegebeur 1975: 152–54, Broekhuis 1971: 90–95, and Vanderlip

did not come easily” to Maiistas, there is little sign in his hexameters, which are without flaws or serious irregularities. His verses make allowances in metrical quantity that were also permissible in Homer or in other Hellenistic poets.¹³⁹ And Maiistas’ poetry is very much of its age in exhibiting a tendency to place syntactical breaks at the bucolic diaeresis.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the overall style and *recherché* vocabulary of Maiistas’ verse are comparable to contemporary Hellenistic literary production.¹⁴¹

The view that Maiistas in his verse merely mimicked Hellenism is, I believe, inadequate for explaining the poet’s position in relation to the Homeric canon. Maiistas did not use Homeric language simply out of a desire to assimilate, or to give an attractive Hellenic luster to his aretalogical verse. It seems at the least far more charitable to credit him with the power to make literary allusions and to establish connections with Homeric intertexts just as would any other Hellenistic poet. His relationship to canonical Greek literature is, nevertheless, complicated by the Egyptian religious ideas to which both the text and the monument as a whole explicitly appeal, especially when framed by Apollonios’ prose account. Maiistas’ appeal to both Greek and Egyptian cultural traditions is reminiscent of certain works by the Alexandrian poets Callimachus and Theocritus, in which, as several scholars have argued, they have adopted a poetics capable of sustaining dual readings, both Greek and Egyptian.¹⁴² To invoke one particularly apt

1972: 94–95. In a similar way, the departure of Agathos Daimon/Kmephis signals the demise of Alexandria in the *Oracle of the Potter* (*P. Oxy.* 2332.50–52; see Koenen 1968: 204–7; translation in Burstein 1985: 136–39).

¹³⁹ For example, Engelmann 1975: 49 finds fault with the short final syllable in ἀκλέα (line 73; but also in line 53), noting that the parallel in *Od.* 4.728 is justified by hiatus correption. There are, however, at least two other Hellenistic examples of ἀκλέα with a short final syllable when followed by a consonant, perhaps following the epic convention: Nic. *Alex.* 114 (πιστέρης κορέοιτο, καὶ ἀκλέα πότμον ἀλύξαι); Max. 6.156 (ἡμιτελῇ γυνίῳ ἀποσείσεται ἀκλέα παῖδα). West 1982: 157 notes that in line 69 the first biceps is filled with a short vowel before an initial plosive and liquid (ἦ τί χῤῥῃ) and scanned long, but this is also found in Theocritus and Apollonius of Rhodes.

¹⁴⁰ In 65 lines, there is word end after the fourth foot 44 times (83%). This coincides with a syntactical break in 11 verses (lines 32, 40, 46, 48, 55, 56, 60, 77, 81, 88, 91). This is comparable to Theocritus’ bucolic poetry (74% – see West 1982: 154), and like Theocritus the bucolic diaeresis is associated with the masculine caesura (81% of lines with masculine caesura have bucolic diaeresis). On the other hand, the feminine caesura predominates over the masculine (64% – this is comparable to Apollonios at 67% and Callimachus at 74%). West 1982: 153 notes one peculiarity: the line division in lines 52–53: ἀλλοδαπῶι ἐν | οὕδει.

¹⁴¹ Though the Homeric allusions have attracted the most attention, Maiistas also employed the diction of other classical favorites, such as Pindar, Euripides, Aristophanes, Hesiod (see Engelmann 1975 on lines 31, 41, 43, 44, 66, 68, 86, 92, 93), and some of his rare poetic words are shared with other Hellenistic poets such as Theocritus, Apollonius of Rhodes, and Lycophron (see Engelmann 1975 on lines 30, 31, 42, 50, 59, 72).

¹⁴² Over the last three decades, a number of scholars have produced detailed arguments that Alexandrian poetry contains references to the indigenous culture of Ptolemaic Egypt: Koenen 1968, 1977, 1983; Merkelbach 1981; Gelzer 1982; Mineur 1984; Bing 1988: esp. 131–39; Selden 1998; Stephens 2003.

example, Callimachus in the *Hymn to Delos* identifies Apollo, born on an island, with Horus on the island of Chemmis and interweaves Greek and Egyptian mythology and cosmology in praise of the dual Greek–Egyptian ideology of Ptolemaic kingship.¹⁴³ Such readings of major Hellenistic poets have at times met with skepticism and questions about whether Greeks in the Alexandrian milieu were sufficiently aware of or even interested in Egyptian culture to make and understand such allusions.¹⁴⁴ These concerns can hardly apply here. In this hymn to an Egyptian divinity, Egyptian elements are very much in the foreground, and with the possibilities of a dual Greek–Egyptian poetics in mind, I propose to look for “Greek” references in an “Egyptian” poem.

On a closer inspection of the Homeric vocabulary that Maiistas uses throughout his poem, the most prominent pattern of allusions centers on the figure of Odysseus. This pattern is established in the first ten lines of the hymn. Maiistas invokes Sarapis with the epithet πολύαινος, “much-praised,” in the first line. The epithet is not semantically surprising at the beginning of a hymn, but the literary allusion is. Πολύαινος in Homer and indeed in the rest of Greek literature before late antiquity always refers to Odysseus. In Homer, it always occurs in the vocative case in the opening line of a speech addressed to the hero, and so is entirely appropriate to the present pragmatic context: a salutation in the opening invocation of a hymn.¹⁴⁵ By applying this well-known epithet of Odysseus to Sarapis, Maiistas draws a connection between the legendary Greek figure and the Egyptian divinity and the mythical stories of each. This doubling is given a geographical and cultural dimension by the rest of the invocation in which it occurs (ll. 30–33):

μυρία καὶ θαμβητὰ σέθεν, πολύαινε Σάραπτι,
ἔργα, τὰ μὲν θείας ἀνὰ τύρσιας Αἰγύπτουιο
ἠϋδῆται, τὰ δὲ πᾶσαν ἀν’ Ἑλλάδα . . .

Myriad and astonishing, much-praised Sarapis, are your
deeds; some have been proclaimed throughout the divine battlements
of Egypt, some throughout all Hellas . . .

¹⁴³ Stephens 2003: 74–121.

¹⁴⁴ Zanker 1989 and Goldhill 2005 have been particularly ardent in defending the cultural boundaries of Hellenistic poetry. For a more balanced overview, see Hunter 2003: 46–53.

¹⁴⁵ *Il.* 9.673, 10.544, 11.430; *Od.* 12.184. The epithet is also used of Odysseus in a lyric fragment (*PMG* Lyrica Adespota fr. 7e, subfragment 1, line 10). Together with the hymn of Maiistas, the latter citations are the only attestations of this word in Greek literature before it begins to appear in Christian writers starting in the fifth century CE. The Homeric lines were quoted by several authors, suggesting that the word would be well known as an epithet of Odysseus (Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.11; Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 630c11; Sext. Emp. *Math.* 1.42, line 7; Clem. Al. *Protr.* 12.118.2; Origen *C. Cels.* 2.76, line 66).

The expression undoubtedly refers to the universality of the god's power in that it extends to both Greece and Egypt, but it does so by setting the telling of deeds in each land alongside one another, suggesting a comparison of Greek and Egyptian traditions. Two lines later (ll. 35–39), the poet, in the manner of a good Greek hymn,¹⁴⁶ focuses on the particular place and events he will describe:

καὶ γὰρ τ' ἀμφιαλεῖ Δήλῳι ἀρίσθημα τέλεσσας
τὰ πολλῶνίου ἱρὰ καὶ εἰς μέγαν ἡγάγες αἶνον.
αὐτὸς δ' οἱ δηναῖα πατὴρ ἐκόμισσεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς
Μέμφιδος, ὅππότε νηῖ πολυζύγῳ ἦλυθεν ἄστρ
Φοῖβου . . .

And also on sea-girt Delos have you made illustrious
the rites of Apollonios and brought them to great praise.
Of his own accord, the father long ago brought them hither from
Memphis itself, when in a many-benched ship he came to the city
of Phoebus . . .

These lines contain two more echoes which tie the specific events of the hymn back to the dual mythical figure announced in its first line, again forming a nexus of overlapping representations. The scene of the action is to be ἀμφιάλος Δῆλος – “sea-girt Delos.” Ἀμφιάλος is a Homeric epithet that always refers to Odysseus’ island home of Ithaka.¹⁴⁷ The next allusion is perhaps more indirect, but with the signals already provided, I believe it is reasonable to connect it with Odysseus. The quotation itself is quite precise. The elder Apollonios comes to Delos “in a many-benched ship” (νηῖ πολυζύγῳ). There is a single occurrence of πολυζύγος in Homer, and it comes in a speech by Odysseus in the very same phrase (νηῖ πολυζύγῳ) at *Iliad* 2.293.

Why did Maiistas make repeated allusions to Odysseus in the opening lines of a hymn to Sarapis? The phrase νηῖ πολυζύγῳ is critical to

¹⁴⁶ Callim. *Hymn* 1 employs this type of opening; see also the *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 1–29.

¹⁴⁷ *Od.* 1.386, 395, 401; 2.293; 21.252. The Homeric epithet ἀμφιάλος was also applied to Ithaca in the Hellenistic period in an epitaph honoring a prominent citizen of Odysseus’ home island (*IG IX*² 1720; Page 1976: 173–74; discussed below). Sophocles uses it once in relation to Lemnos (*Phil.* 1464), Pindar once of Corinth (*Ol.* 13.40), and Apollonios of Rhodes once of Naxos (*Argon.* 4.425). The choice seems carefully made on the part of Maiistas, since ἀμφιάλος was not a usual epithet for Delos. In *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 27, Delos is ἀμφιρύτη, a word which would scan just as well in the same spot, and which is used elsewhere of Delos – notably on the third-century BCE Philetairos base on Delos itself (*IG XI.4* 1105, line 8: Δήλῳι . . . ἀμφιρύτη; cf. also Aristed. *Orat.* 45.3: Δῶλον ἀμφιρρύταν). So it seems likely that the allusion to the *Odyssey* is intentional. The formation ἀμφιαλεῖ is unusual, and it is probably the dative of the otherwise unattested ἀμφιαλής. Alternatively, this could be an Attic spelling for ἀμφιάλη, but ἀμφιάλος in Homer and elsewhere is an adjective of two endings, so this seems less likely.

answering this question, since it points to Odysseus' struggles as an epic paradigm for understanding the struggles of Sarapis and his priests on the island of Delos. The context from which Maiistas draws his Homeric quotation is the famous speech in which Odysseus persuades the Achaeans, in the ninth year of their war against Troy, to stay and continue the fight despite their discouragement. The quotation and the episode as a whole were probably recognizable to any literate Greek, since the second book of the *Iliad* was one of the most widely studied in antiquity, to judge by the evidence of school texts and literary references.¹⁴⁸ This was an important moment in the narrative – without it there is no *Iliad*. Odysseus, famous for his own long-deferred homecoming, persuades the Achaeans to defer their returns until they have taken Troy. At the beginning of his address, he acknowledges their frustration (*Iliad* 2.292–94):

καὶ γὰρ τίς θ' ἕνα μῆνα μένων ἀπὸ τῆς ἀλόχοιο
 ἀσχαλάα σὺν νηὶ πολυζύγῳ, ὃν περ ἄελλαί
 χειμέριαι εἰλέωσιν ὀρινομένη τε θάλασσα . . .

For anyone who remains even one single month away from his
 wife in a many-benched ship is vexed, especially he whom winter
 blasts and surging seas hold back . . .

The Odysseus of the *Iliad* here makes a nod toward his own epic and his long journey back to Penelope. The episode also draws attention to Odysseus' dual role in another way. The speech comes after he has beaten and silenced Thersites in the assembly of the Greek army. In rebuking the “worst of the Achaeans,” Odysseus mentions the son he has left behind on Ithaka, “May I no longer be called the father of Telemachus, if I do not seize you and strip off your clothes . . . and send you yourself wailing to the swift ships” (*Iliad* 2.260–63). Odysseus in this passage is a very intertextual hero,¹⁴⁹ and the context of the phrase νηὶ πολυζύγῳ in the *Iliad* evokes the displacement and wandering for which the hero was celebrated in his own epic. The first Apollonios, in short, arrived on Delos in a “many-benched ship” with epic resonances suitable for an émigré who has traveled to a strange land far from his native Egypt – epic resonances that were also in harmony with the experience of his descendants, who lived in diaspora but kept alive connections to their ancestral homeland.

Odysseus' wanderings also color Maiistas' narration of the struggles that the younger Apollonios faced in founding his temple for Sarapis. When the poet describes Apollonios' pleas to Sarapis to reveal where he should build

¹⁴⁸ Criatore 2001: 194–97.

¹⁴⁹ Pucci 1987: 33–43, esp. 37 n. 10, 41–42.

a temple, he describes the god's temporary arrangements and the search for a permanent home as if Sarapis were wandering from foreign land to foreign land (ll. 49–53):

... ἀεὶ δ' ἐλλίσ(σ)ετο νειόν
 ὅππῃ σοι δείμειεν ἀριφραδέως κατάλεξαι
 ἔννυχον(ν) ὑπνῶοντι, διηνεκὲς ὄφρα κε μίμνοις
 σηκῶι ἐνιδρυθεὶς μηδ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλοδαπῶι ἐν
 οὔδει ἐνιχρίμπτοιο.

... and he always begged you
 to declare manifestly to him while sleeping at night where he should
 build for you a temple, so that you might constantly remain
 established in a precinct, and not press on from one foreign land
 to another.

The corresponding passage in the prose version (ll. 13–16) presents the situation more directly: up to the point of Apollonios' dream revelation, the god had been dwelling in "rented lodgings" (μισθωτοῖς). With the adjective ἄλλοδαπός, which always refers to foreign lands or peoples, Maiistas turns this unsettled time in the history of the cult on Delos into a period of Odyssean wanderings.¹⁵⁰ The poet also uses a turn of phrase reminiscent of Odysseus' adventures to elaborate on Apollonios' sparse account of the charges brought against him and the sanctuary. He describes the priest's emotional state as he faces the prospect of the trial (ll. 70–72):

... κακῶι θ' ὑπὸ δείματι πᾶσαν
 ἦν τε{ι ν}νύκτας τε περὶ κραδίην ἐλέλιζεν
 τάρβος θειοπόλοιο...

Under an evil dread all day
 and every night, terror whirled the ministrant's
 heart around...

¹⁵⁰ In the phrase μηδ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλοδαπῶι ἐν | οὔδει ἐνιχρίμπτοιο Maiistas uses Homeric language in innovative combinations to achieve his desired effect. The phrases ἄλλυδις ἄλλος, ἄλλυδις ἄλλῃ and the like are used in Homer to indicate things or people scattering this way and that (Engelmann 1975: 38), but here the second element is replaced by ἄλλοδαπῶι ἐν | οὔδει, a phrase which itself evokes Homeric expressions referring to foreign lands or peoples: γαίῃ ἐν ἄλλοδαπῇ (*Od.* 9.36); ἄλλοδαπῶ ἐνὶ δῆμῳ (*Il.* 19.324); δῆμῳ ἐν ἄλλοδαπῶ (*Od.* 8.211); ἄνδρας ἐς ἄλλοδαπούς (*Il.* 24.382, *Od.* 14.231, 20.220). The final element of ἄλλοδαπῶι ἐν | οὔδει again defies expectation somewhat, but οὔδει, the poetic word for "ground," "surface of the earth," or "floor," ties the whole expression back to the more concrete search for a building plot. The unusual division between lines 52 and 53 and the enjambment probably drew even more attention to the novelty of this phrase.

The phrase “terror whirled the ministrant’s heart around” echoes Homer’s description of an enormous wave that whirls Odysseus’ raft around (μέγα κῦμα . . . περὶ δὲ σχεδὶν ἑλέλιξε) and sweeps the hero away (*Od.* 5.313–14).¹⁵¹ This reference to the perilous storm that buffets Odysseus lends epic dimensions to the priest’s inner turmoil, but it perhaps also foreshadows the divine intervention to come. Odysseus, after all, is soon rescued from drowning by the goddess Ino–Leukothea (*Od.* 5.333–55), just as Apollonios is saved by Sarapis.

A Homeric precedent for the miraculous victory gained through the intervention of Sarapis can also be found in the earlier quotation of Odysseus’ speech in book 2 of the *Iliad*. At the core of Odysseus’ exhortation to the Achaeans to continue fighting is the omen they saw at Aulis: a snake eating eight young sparrows and then a ninth (their mother), before Zeus turned the snake to stone. The seer Kalchas interpreted this wonder as foretelling nine years of fighting before they would take Troy in the tenth year. Odysseus urges the assembled Greeks to remember this prophecy and stay until the “great city of Priam” is captured (*Il.* 2.299–332). Maiistas’ periphrasis for Delos, the “city of Phoebus” (νηὶ πολυζύγῳ ἦλυθεν ἄστυ | Φοίβου, *Il.* 38–39), recalls the Homeric tag for Troy that Odysseus uses in his speech (ἄστυ μέγα Πριάμοιο – *Il.* 2.332).¹⁵² Apollonios’ arrival on Delos and the success of his descendants are to some extent, then, cast in terms of the long siege and eventual capture of Troy, but the prophetic dimension of Odysseus’ speech is perhaps the more significant, given the recurrent oracles through which Sarapis guides his priests in Maiistas’ hymn, and especially his intervention in the trial. The accusers of Apollonios are not only rendered unable to speak by Sarapis and Isis, they are also likened to “god-struck images” (θεοπληγέσσιν . . . εἰδώλοισιν *l.* 89) or “stones” (λάεσσιν *l.* 90), just as Zeus turns the snake at Aulis to stone (λᾶν – *Il.* 2.319). Maiistas uses Homer’s image of the divine petrification of the snake to portray the paralyzation of Apollonios’ accusers, and he calls the entire wonder κῆνο πέλωρον “that portent” (*l.* 84). This echoes the δεινὰ πέλωρα, the “terrible portents” that Odysseus says intruded on the

¹⁵¹ As noted by Engellmann 1975: 48–49.

¹⁵² See Engellmann 1975: 30. Cf. also line 92: θεόδητον . . . Δῆλον. Though Euripides uses θεόδητον several times, the only occurrence in Homer is in reference to the walls of Troy (*Il.* 8.519). This was also an epithet that Pindar used of Delos (*Ol.* 6.59; frag. 33e). Note that ἄστυ Φοίβου can also describe Troy, since Laomedon employed both Phoebus Apollo and Poseidon in building its walls. See *Il.* 7.452 (though at *Il.* 21.441–57, Poseidon alone builds the walls while Apollo tends sheep for Laomedon). See also Pind. *Ol.* 8.31–84 and Lucian *Sacr.* 4. Occasionally Apollo alone is described as the builder of Troy’s walls. See Eur. *Tro.* 814 (τυκίσματα Φοίβου), and Ov. *Her.* 1.67 (*moenia Phoebe*).

hecatomb at Aulis (*Il.* 2.321).¹⁵³ And just as the gathered Achaeans stood and marveled at what had happened, so did the crowd assembled on Delos.¹⁵⁴ By portraying the climactic miracle on Delos in terms of the portent at Aulis, Maiistas resumes and completes his earlier reference to Odysseus' speech, but his return to this referent is also a fulfillment of prophecy: a fulfillment of Sarapis' dream oracle certainly, but perhaps also of the promise of victory that Odysseus held out to the Achaeans. The victory to which Maiistas refers, moreover, is twofold. Troy would eventually fall, but first Odysseus had to carry the day in the assembly of the Achaeans, and so he did. His rhetorical victory serves as an epic precedent for Apollonios' success in court just as much as the prophesied fall of Troy.

The Odysseus to whom Maiistas refers is, as I mentioned earlier, an intertextual Odysseus: he is the hero at Troy, but also the hero of the *Odyssey*. Accordingly, Maiistas portrays Delos, the "city of Phoebus" (ἄστυ Φοίβου), as a type of Troy, but also as the island home of Odysseus. He refers to the island on which Sarapis brought great fame to Apollonios' sanctuary as "sea-girt Delos" (ἀμφιάλει Δήλῳ, l. 35). The epithet ἀμφιάλος, from which Maiistas' novel form ἀμφιάλης derives, appears five times in the *Odyssey*, and each time in reference to Ithaka. The word is otherwise rather rare. Later poets occasionally used ἀμφιάλος to describe other islands, but a Hellenistic-period epitaph from Ithaka itself demonstrates the endurance of the Homeric formula ἀμφιάλος Ἰθάκη.¹⁵⁵ Maiistas' allusion suggests that in addition to his references to the omen at Aulis and to the wanderings of Odysseus, the events on Ithaka served as another poetical reference point for his version of Apollonios' story. Looking at the context from which he draws the epithet ἀμφιάλος clarifies the poet's interests in making an Odyssean connection alongside his references to the *Iliad*. Of the five occurrences of the epithet in the *Odyssey*, three are in the first book. In each of these cases, the two words ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ fall on either side of the masculine caesura, just as with Maiistas' ἀμφιάλει Δήλῳ.¹⁵⁶ This phrase is repeated three times in the space of sixteen

¹⁵³ The two phrases both occur in the same metrical position, i.e. beginning in the second foot. That this could have been recognized as a reference to Homer is suggested by a similar allusion in Ap. Rhod., *Argon.* 4.143. The serpent guarding the golden fleece is called κείνο πέλωρον, and this phrase also occurs in the same metrical position. My thanks to Martine Cuypers for pointing this out to me.

¹⁵⁴ The parallel themes and poetic expressions are closely clustered together in both passages. Compare lines 84–91 in the hymn to *Il.* 2.319–22: λᾶαν γὰρ μιν ἔθηκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω· | ἡμεῖς δ' ἔσταότες θαυμάζομεν οἷον ἐτύχθη. | ὥς οὖν δεινὰ πέλωρα θεῶν εἰσῆλθ' ἑκατόμβας, | Κάλχας δ' αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα θεοπροπέων ἀγόρευε· . . .

¹⁵⁵ *IG IX*² 1720; Page 1976: 173–74; see also the references in n. 147 above.

¹⁵⁶ *Od.* 1.386, 395, 401.

lines during the altercation between Telemachus and the suitors, as the son of Odysseus asserts his rights of property and inheritance in his father's house. The suitor Antinous replies to an outburst from Telemachus: "May the son of Kronos never make you king in sea-girt Ithaka, | which thing is your heritage by birth" (μή σέ γ' ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ βασιλῆα Κρονίων | ποιήσειεν, ὃ τοι γενεῇ πατρώϊόν ἐστιν).¹⁵⁷

The story set on Ithaka is, of course, a struggle over succession and inheritance, which pits the suitors, who wish to usurp the house of Odysseus and the kingdom of Ithaka by marrying the former king's wife, against the king's son and rightful heir by patrilineal descent. The conflict is resolved by the return of Odysseus, who sides with his son and punishes the suitors. Odysseus' successful return is not complete when he has reached the shores of Ithaka, but is gradually negotiated through the recognition of signs. Maiistas alludes to these signs in recounting one of the series of oracles that guided the Egyptian priests. He has Apollonios beg Sarapis "to declare manifestly" (ἀριφραδέως κατάλεξαι, l. 50) where he should build a temple. The hymn here appears to be echoing a verse in which Penelope acknowledges that Odysseus has revealed tokens of recognition that only her husband would know: "now since you have manifestly declared the signs" (νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ἦδη σήματ' ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας, *Od.* 23.225).¹⁵⁸ In Maiistas' narrative, however, the most important sign is the wonder that Sarapis performs at the trial, when the tongues of Apollonios' accusers are made silent in their jaws. The language, as several scholars have pointed out, evokes the magical binding spells that were used to gain a competitive advantage in the law courts,¹⁵⁹ but the poetical word γναθμός in this context may also allude to the uncanny scene in *Od.* 20.345–49 when the suitors, struck witless by Athena, laugh "with the jaws of another" (γναθμοῖσι γελοίων ἄλλοτρίοισιν), a sign of their impending doom.¹⁶⁰ These allusions to the epic events on Ithaka suggest that Maiistas is representing Sarapis' intervention on behalf of Apollonios as analogous to Odysseus'

¹⁵⁷ *Od.* 1.386–87.

¹⁵⁸ The adjective ἀριφραδής occurs several times in Homer (*Il.* 23.240, 326; *Od.* 11.126, 21.217, 23.73, 225, 273, 24.329), and is always placed in the same metrical position as Maiistas' ἀριφραδέως. In the *Odyssey*, the word always modifies σῆμα, but Maiistas here appears to be quoting the phrase in 23.225.

¹⁵⁹ See Engelmann 1975: 53.

¹⁶⁰ This is the only time γναθμός appears in the dative in Homer. Note that this episode in the *Odyssey* is followed by the prophetic utterance of Theoclymenus predicting evil for those "who commit outrages against men and devise wicked folly in the house of god-like Odysseus" (*Od.* 20.369–70). Cf. Engelmann 1975: 54. The normal term for binding would be καταδέω or a similar expression. Here Maiistas uses πεδάω, a more Homeric word.

intervention in the conflict between Telemachus and the suitors. "Sea-girt" Delos is imagined as the home in which Sarapis and his priests must (re-)establish themselves after their wanderings and heroic struggles. The father-son bond in the fight against the suitors who wish to usurp Odysseus' position and Telemachus' patrimony adds Homeric resonances to Apollonios' narrative of genealogy and priestly lineage. The outcome of the trial, following the logic of this allusion, indicated not only the legality of the sanctuary and the power of the god, but also the successful defense of Apollonios' patrimony and his legitimate succession to his father's office despite the efforts of impious and grasping enemies.

As with the other dimensions of Maiistas' Odyssean allusions, his comparison of the conflict on Delos to the struggles of Odysseus and Telemachus on Ithaka adds a rich texture of epic associations that heroize the actions and characters of Apollonios' narrative in terms comprehensible to a literate Greek reader or listener. But in the case of these particular associations, he also creates a remarkable thematic convergence between his references to Greek epic and the Egyptian myth to which the monument and especially the motif of the trial refer. The parallels are not exact, but the Homeric allusions to Ithaka suggest a pattern of structural analogies between the situation on Delos, the story of Telemachus and Odysseus, and the mythical struggle between Horus and Seth. Sarapis, when evoked in Odyssean tones, plays the role of Osiris, an underworldly father figure who intervenes on behalf of his legitimate heir: Horus/Telemachus. Yet any particular paradigmatic substitutions or correspondences, especially between Homeric myth and Egyptian, are not so important as the syntagmatic analogies which endow the trial of Apollonios with its significance. In both the *Odyssey* and the "Contentings of Horus and Seth" the affirmation of a disputed principle of inheritance is constructed as dependent on the ancestor's recognition of the true heir and his intervention on that heir's behalf. As I argued above, the myth of Horus and Seth served as a precedent for dynastic succession in pharaonic kingship, but here it has been adapted for use as a pattern of priestly succession. The Egyptian and Greek myths to which the inscription appeals converge on this one point: they both represent the intervention of Sarapis not simply as a sign of the god's miraculous power, but as a sign of the legitimacy of the priestly lineage and, by extension, the sanctuary, whose fate was in doubt at the trial.

Having proposed this interpretation of the Delian Sarapis aretalogy and its efforts to represent a particular event in the history of Egyptian religion on the island, I would like to return briefly to the questions of syncretism,

Hellenization, and cultural identity that I have raised at earlier points in this chapter. Maiistas' intelligible echoes of canonical Greek literature show that his poetry was considerably more than a creaky apparatus for mimicking Hellenism. His Homeric allusions to Odysseus evoke the dislocation and struggles of émigrés wandering in the Hellenistic world; they find epic analogies for Sarapis' oracular predictions and Apollonios' victory; and the doubling of Delos and Ithaka reinforces the narrative's more explicit uses of filiation and succession to establish the legitimacy of Apollonios' office and sanctuary. These effective connections with Homeric poetry are, however, not merely signs of a more complete acculturation, since the subjects of Maiistas' Odyssean adventures are assertively Egyptian, and allusions to Greek literature rub shoulders with Egyptian discourses. Maiistas situated his hymn in relation to both cultures, or rather – to return to the genealogical trope so prominent in the inscription itself – he affiliated himself with a hybrid cultural and literary ancestry.

Recent scholarship in post-colonial literature has explored the similarly complex literary genealogies that post-colonial authors writing in English adopt when they “write back” to canonical English texts.¹⁶¹ Such post-colonial responses have often been subversive, or have rejected the colonial parent figure, in order to establish counter-discourses to the dominant, canonical literatures.¹⁶² Some authors, however, have cultivated affinities with canonical texts and authors while challenging colonial models of lineal descent from a “civilizing” metropolis and including other, indigenous ancestors in a more heterogeneous family tree of affiliative identifications.¹⁶³ Derek Walcott's Homer, to choose just one example, is no colonial father-figure, no path to poetical legitimacy by descent from an earlier model,

¹⁶¹ The phrase “the empire writes back” comes from the title of an article written by Salman Rushdie (1982), and has been adopted as a catch phrase in post-colonial literary studies. See, e.g., Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1989.

¹⁶² See Tiffin 1987.

¹⁶³ On this replacement of filiation with affiliation in modern literature and criticism, see Said 1983: 1–30. Maiistas' appeal to canonical Greek literature could be described in terms similar to those used recently by J. Thieme (who draws on Said): “The extent to which postcolonial con-texts [i.e. texts written in response to canonical literature] are indebted to their English pre-texts varies considerably and the relationship is virtually always complicated by the introduction of other intertexts that unsettle the supposedly direct line of descent from the canonical ‘original’”. Thus, to borrow Edward Said's terminology, filiative relationships are replaced by affiliative identifications (*World* 174), straightforward lines of descent, such as one, at least supposedly, finds in canonical English literature, are replaced by literary genealogies that reject colonial parent figures, or at least only allow such figures to exist as members of an extended, and usually hybrid, ancestral family” (Thieme 2001: 7). Salman Rushdie, for example, in reflecting on the condition of a diasporic writer explicitly chooses a wide variety of literary parents (1991: esp. 15–21).

but rather a coeval, a fellow-poet to an Afro-Greek.¹⁶⁴ In some works of post-colonial literature, the problem of the author's cultural position in relation to the hegemonic texts of the colonial power is represented through figures of illegitimacy, or through hidden or hybrid ancestry. In the case of Maiistas, it is important to reiterate that within the narrative of his hymn (as shaped by both the Greek and the Egyptian metanarratives to which it refers) the function of the genealogical trope is to reinforce the legitimate heritage of Apollonios.¹⁶⁵ In this respect, the hymn differs little from Apollonios' more straightforward appeal to Egyptian descent and formal conventions. Maiistas' Homeric allusions, however, affirm this Egyptian filiation with a poetical language and literary proficiency that also asserts a Greek affiliation. This "syncretism" is not a failed attempt at the emulation of a Greek literary parent, but a conscious, motivated appeal to a dual literary and mythical heritage, one that claims legitimacy through both lines, Greek and Egyptian.

THE ARETALOGY AND THE HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN RELIGION ON DELOS

The claims to legitimacy and authenticity made by the monument of Apollonios also complicate any interpretation of the text and its function according to generic definitions of aretalogy and the consequent "aretalogical" (almost evangelical) narrative of cult propagation – especially in the local context of Delos. I outlined at the start of this chapter Roussel's history of the cult of Sarapis on Delos, in which he saw the miracle of Sarapis' intervention in the trial and Apollonios' successful defense against Greek religious conservatives as a turning point which led to rapid expansion, and eventually to official acceptance of the Egyptian gods on the sacred island of Apollo. In outline, this was the story followed by Nock in *Conversion*, and more recently by Engelmann and others.¹⁶⁶ The aretalogy, in this account, promotes the miracle of Sarapis in order to enhance the

¹⁶⁴ See Walcott 1974; Greenwood 2005: esp. pp. 71–73 and 84–85.

¹⁶⁵ This contrasts with the use to which the figure of illegitimacy is often put in contemporary post-colonial literature, where issues of problematic cultural and ethnic parentage occasioned by colonialism and imperialism are confronted directly. Saleem Sinai in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), for example, is an illegitimate child of an Englishman, but also claims parentage from a Hindu mother, a Goan Catholic nurse, and numerous others in addition to the secular Muslims who raised him (see the brief discussion in Thieme 2001: 8–9). Note also the Odyssean figure of Plunkett, to whom Walcott plays Telemachos in *Omeros* (1990), discussed by Alles 2001: 433.

¹⁶⁶ See above n. 5.

prestige and appeal of the Egyptian gods. The foregoing reading, however, suggests another possibility. If, as I have argued, Apollonios' narrative and Maiistas' hymn took pains to portray the divine intervention in the trial not only as evidence of the god's power, but also as a sign that Apollonios, by virtue of his heritage, his pious obedience to Sarapis, and his assimilation to the mythical role of Horus, was the authentic and legitimate priest of Sarapis, then conversely it is also portraying the opposing litigants in a Sethian light, as illegitimate usurpers. But who are these opponents and what motivated them? Were they really conservative Delians opposing the introduction of a foreign cult? Foucart in a note appended to Roussel's *Inscriptiones Graecae* commentary raised the possibility that "wicked Envy" (κακὸς Φθόνος l. 66) truly was behind the lawsuit: rivalry, jealousy, and private hostility on the part of others who saw the sanctuary as a threat.¹⁶⁷ Roussel rejected this idea, arguing that there was no rival establishment that would want to remove the competition,¹⁶⁸ but perhaps the legal threat to the sanctuary of Apollonios did in fact come from other Sarapieia, or at least from other groups involved in the cult of Egyptian gods.

Roussel argued that Sarapieion A was the first sanctuary, and that the others sprouted up after Apollonios' victory had demonstrated the power of the god. As I mentioned above, however, this argument was based almost entirely on the Sarapis aretalogy itself – a text which is dated only approximately to the late third or early second century BCE. The priority of Sarapieion A is, in fact, far from certain, and Roussel was obliged to dismiss evidence that other sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods may have been contemporary or earlier. The oldest inscription on Delos relating to the Egyptian gods is, in fact, the dedication to Isis that I noted earlier, which was made by a woman bearing the name Taessa (perhaps equivalent to the Egyptian *Ta-ḥt* = "She of Isis").¹⁶⁹ On palaeographical grounds, this inscription dates to the beginning of the third century BCE, and was found in Sarapieion C. Since the latter sanctuary probably did not exist at such an early date, it is possible that it was transferred there from another cult place.¹⁷⁰ A fragmentary inscription dated ca. 220 BCE makes reference to an Isieion, but it is impossible to tell whether

¹⁶⁷ "Intentatur causa publica . . . nulla sane erga Sarapidem odio, quem universi Graeci gratia Ptolemaeorum libenter acceperant, sed privata invidia in sacerdotem qui stipes cogendo et reditus dei augendo ditiescebat." Foucart's argument rejects Greek hostility to the Egyptian gods, though perhaps on dubious grounds. Dunand 1973: 2.92–93 obliquely attributes the lawsuit to a private feud.

¹⁶⁸ Roussel 1915–16: 252.

¹⁶⁹ CE 40 (= *RICIS* 202/0160); note the roughly contemporary dedication (ca. early third century BCE) by Taosa, also found in Sarapieion C (discussed above; CE 63 = *RICIS* 202/0189).

¹⁷⁰ As Roussel 1915–16: 117 suggests.

this structure stood within the precinct which later became Sarapieion C, or elsewhere.¹⁷¹ The cult of another Egyptian divinity, in any case, was conducted in the period contemporary with the early history of Apollonios' lineage. Sarapieion C itself was active from 215 BCE at the latest, according to an exactly dated inscription on a silver cup dedicated by a certain Soteles, and recorded in a later inventory.¹⁷² Sarapieion B was constructed at the end of the third or the beginning of the second century BCE; its earliest securely dated inscription puts the sanctuary at least as far back as 196 BCE.¹⁷³ There is, in other words, very little separating the early dates attributable to the various Sarapieia, and so it is entirely possible that they were founded at about the same time, or in an order different from that conventionally assumed.¹⁷⁴ This approximate period in which the Egyptian sanctuaries were built was a prosperous time for Delos. An increasing transit trade to the rest of the Cyclades was bringing new wealth to Delos

¹⁷¹ Roussel 1915–16: 208. See also Dunand 1973: 2.86, who uses this evidence to argue that the cult of Isis on Delos was earlier than that of Sarapis.

¹⁷² Roussel 1915–16: 214 (= *IDelos* 1417 A II 89–91 = *RICIS* 202/0424). The inventory, made in 155/4 BCE, records offerings transferred from Sarapieion C to the temple of Artemis. For further references relating to Soteles, see Mora 1990: 1.117 (s.v. Σωτέλης Σωτέλου). Archaeological estimates also put the sanctuary of Sarapieion C, though not the shrine of Sarapis itself, in the later third century. See Dunand 1973: 2.87–89 and Vallois 1944: 85, 93–95, 110 on the dates of the various sanctuaries. More recent excavations have demonstrated that the dromos and the small temple at its southern end belong to later phases in the construction of Sarapieion C (see Siard 2003 and Siard in Etienne et al. 2002: 537–45). There is other epigraphical evidence from Sarapieion C of dates even earlier than 215 BCE, but these are subject to much more uncertainty. *CE* 44 (= *RICIS* 202/0164), a dedication dated palaeographically to the last quarter of the third century, was made by a man with the ethnic Ἀθυμβριανός. Since Athymbra was refounded by Antiochus I as Nysa in 261 BCE, it is possible that the inscription is toward the earlier end of the range proposed. See Roussel 1915–16: 108–9, and Mora 1990: 1.70–71 (s.v. Ἰατροκλῆς Δημαγάθου Ἀθυμβριανός). *CE* 41 (= *RICIS* 202/0161), a fragmentary dedication, makes apparent reference to a king Ἄν[. . .] and a queen, perhaps in association with a Demetrios. The king's name could be Antiochus and thus one of several Seleucid monarchs, but Roussel 1915–16: 107 himself argued against such identifications and proposed Antigonus Gonatas (d. 239 BCE), though with reservations owing to the early date.

¹⁷³ Cf. Vallois 1944: 85, 93–95, 110. *CE* 20 (= *RICIS* 202/0134) is a marble plaque dated to the archonship of Diogenes (196 BCE) recording the dedication of couches by the *eranistai*. Another inscription (*CE* 28b = *RICIS* 202/0143) records the dedication of benches by a Kian. Roussel 1915–16: 102 argued that since Kios was destroyed in 202 BCE by Philip V of Macedon, and the population was enslaved, the dedicator lived in the third century. It is entirely possible, however, that this Kian was living abroad and kept his ethnic after the destruction of the city.

¹⁷⁴ According to Engelmann 1975: 14, who follows the sequence of Sarapieia proposed by Roussel, the assumption of the priesthood by Apollonios II (after which Sarapieion A was constructed) occurred between 210 and 205 BCE. On the above evidence, this would put Sarapieion C first. In any case there is considerable room for doubt. Even if Sarapieion A was the first of the sanctuaries, the pillar commemorating the trial could well have been erected long after the event, at a time when the other Sarapieia had already come into existence. This hypothesis would at least explain the differences between the palaeographical features of Apollonios' dedication to Nike (*CE* 3 = *RICIS* 202/0121) and the letters of the aretalogical inscription. See the discussion above, pp. 156–57.

along with foreign residents, and an increase in building activity.¹⁷⁵ The stimulus to the growth of Egyptian sanctuaries was as much economic as evangelical.

With all three Sarapieia developing contemporaneously and in close proximity to one another in the Inopos valley, it is quite possible that the frictions leading to the litigation against Apollonios were not the result of a fissure between Greek conservatism and Egyptian religion as a whole, but between different sanctuaries and groups practicing the cult of Egyptian gods in a Greek context. This sort of intra-religious conflict did occur elsewhere as the Egyptian gods found homes in the wider Mediterranean. In his letter seeking patronage from the Ptolemaic finance minister Apollonios (mentioned earlier), Zoilos describes the struggles he faced. In relating the dream oracles that prompted his efforts to build a temple, Zoilos tells of a man from Knidos who brought stones to the proposed site of his Sarapieion and attempted to take over the foundation, but was forbidden by the god to carry out construction.¹⁷⁶ In this text, there is no hint of any differences between Zoilos and the man from Knidos outside of their competition over the privilege and prestige of patronage. On Delos, however, the relative wealth of evidence allows a fuller picture in which to look for variations between the three sanctuaries that developed there and perhaps competed with one another in the late third century BCE.

Both parts of the text inscribed on the pillar, as I have argued, extol not only the power of Sarapis, but also the legitimacy, traditional piety, and religious conservatism of the priestly lineage of Sarapieion A: Apollonios' prose chronicle through an appeal to traditional Egyptian discourses, and the hymn of Maiistas by retelling the story in poetical language that evokes parallel themes in canonical Greek literature. The monument stakes a claim that the priests of Sarapieion A are the true bearers of Egyptian religious tradition, perhaps to the detriment of other sanctuaries. Did Sarapieion A, however, possess any particular qualities to back up this claim? The physical and visual evidence suggests only slight differences between the sanctuaries in what could be considered (crudely) *indicia* of "Egyptianness."¹⁷⁷ Most

¹⁷⁵ For this period of prosperity and its characteristics see the summary in Reger 1994b: 257–63.

¹⁷⁶ ἐπεὶ δὲ τάχιστα ὑγιάνθη, παρεγένετό τις ἐκ Κνίδου ὃς ἐνεχείρησεν οἰκοδομεῖν Σαραπείον ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ καὶ προσαγγηγόχει λίθους· ὕστερον δὲ ἀπειπεῖν αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς μὴ οἰκοδομεῖν, κάκεινος ἀπηλλάγη. *P. Cair. Zen.* 59034, ll. 12–15; see also Totti 1985: 160–62.

¹⁷⁷ Dunand 1973: 2.100–7, 115 argues that despite the "Egyptianizing" of Sarapieion A, there was little difference in cult between the three Delian sanctuaries. Though there is Greek influence, she urges recognition of the Egyptianness of the cult of Isis and Sarapis on the island of Delos, *contra* Nock 1933a: 54.

of the sculpture recovered from the sanctuaries is Greek in appearance, though at both A and C, individual pieces of Egyptian origin, style or technique were found.¹⁷⁸ The majority of such objects come from Sarapieion C, no doubt due in part to the wealth and size of this sanctuary, but they also indicate Egyptian elements that were part of its visual character. One of these was the statue of the “beautiful sistrum-player” (*iḥy.t nfr.t*) Nesnephthys found at the Isis temple in Sarapieion C, a figure in typical Late Period Egyptian style with a hieroglyphic text inscribed on the back pillar, most likely imported from Saïs and dating to the 30th Dynasty or later.¹⁷⁹ In Sarapieion A were discovered the fragments of a jackal-headed Anubis figure in Egyptian style with traces of gilding applied using an Egyptian technique.¹⁸⁰ A number of granite sculptural fragments show evidence of Egyptian style and technique, and some chalcite fragments have been interpreted as the work of Egyptian artists on Delos, though whether the works can be connected to a particular Sarapieion is uncertain.¹⁸¹ Also in Sarapieion C, dedications resembling Egyptian phenomena were discovered. Two blocks engraved with footprints and inscriptions naming the dedicators recall the footprints found on the walls, floors, and even roofs of Egyptian temples, engraved by priests or pious visitors, and identified with inscriptions in Greek or in Demotic, Hieratic, or Hieroglyphic Egyptian.¹⁸² Two bronze ears with a dedication to Isis ἐπηκόος (“who listens”) are similar in function to the “hearing ear” stelai and carvings used

¹⁷⁸ For summaries of the finds, see Roussel 1915–16: 32, 45–46, 64–67; Bruneau 1970: 459. For further discussion of certain “Egyptianizing” features of the Sarapieia, see Siard 2002. In addition to the objects described below, the bodies of three sphinxes in Egyptian style, but made from local materials, were discovered along the *dromos* at Sarapieion C (Marcadé 1969: 412). An Egyptian sculpture with dorsal pillar but carved in marble and inscribed in Greek was also found in C (Marcadé 1969: 412; *CE* 88 = *RICIS* 202/0250; photo in Bricault 2005: vol. 3, pl. LIII). An inventory of objects from Sarapieion C lists a statuette of Apollo holding a falcon (on the latter, see Roussel 1915–16: 278).

¹⁷⁹ Leclant and de Meulenaere 1957.

¹⁸⁰ Roussel 1915–16: 32; Marcadé 1969: 413–14, and on the gilding 416–17.

¹⁸¹ Marcadé 1969: 409–10 for the granite fragments; he observes that granite, though available, was not used in Delian sculpture of Greek style. On the chalcite fragments, see Marcadé 1969: 412. Further research is required to determine if any of these pieces can be connected to a particular sanctuary. On the possible influences of Egyptian technique on Greek sculptors on Delos, see Marcadé 1969: 415–18.

¹⁸² Roussel 1915–16: 115–16, 149. *CE* 60, 122 = *RICIS* 202/0186, 202/0288 (for photos, see Bricault 2005: vol. 3, pls. XLVII, LVII). The phenomenon is attested in Egypt from the 19th Dynasty (1295–1190 BCE) until the fifth century CE. For examples with Greek and/or Demotic inscriptions, see A. Bernard 1972: pl. 5 nos. 2–3; A. Bernard 1989: nos. 211, 304, 333, pls. 90.2 and 91; Bernard and Bernard 1969: nos. 188, 189, 196, 198, pls. 57, 58, 99; Bernard 1975–81: vol. 2, p. 7 pl. 36, vol. 3, pl. 40; E. Bernard 1969: no. 109. For examples with Hieroglyphic and Hieratic inscriptions, see the scores of footprints on the roof of the Khonsu temple at Karnak (Jacquet-Gordon 2003: esp. pp. 1–8).

in Egyptian religious practice.¹⁸³ At B and C, “horned” altars were found – altars with acroteria at the four corners that may have evoked exotic Egyptian associations for the residents of Delos in the Hellenistic period. This type of altar was especially prevalent in the Semitic Near East, but Greek immigrants brought it with them to Egypt in the late fourth or early third century BCE, where it was incorporated into both Greek and Egyptian religious contexts.¹⁸⁴ The remains of the structures in which these objects were placed suggest that the architectural style of all the sanctuaries was Greek, though the long *dromos* of C recalls that of the Memphite Sarapieion, and other Egyptian temples. Painted architectural decoration, if there was any, has not survived, so it is impossible to know what it may have contributed to the aesthetics of the different sanctuaries.¹⁸⁵ In general, then, there is no clear-cut difference between the sanctuaries in terms of their respective visual cultures, except the absence (significant or not) of Egyptian-looking material remains connected with Sarapieion B.

The abundance of inscriptions allows some insight into language, nomenclature, and ethnicity at the three sanctuaries. The epigraphical language of the sanctuaries was uniformly Greek,¹⁸⁶ and the names of most individuals connected with them are Greek, though there are also a few non-Greek names scattered among the inscriptions of the three Sarapieia. The only possible Egyptian examples are the early third-century attestation of the name Taessa discussed above, the names Thermouthris and Thaesis (also connected with Sarapieion C though in later documents), and Horus, who appears in inscriptions from Sarapieion A dating to the middle of the second century.¹⁸⁷ Other non-Greek names appear to be Roman, Thracian, Phoenician, Carthaginian, or of more generally Semitic origins. Names, of

¹⁸³ CE 189 = *RICIS* 202/0361 (photo in Bricault 2005: pl. LXVII). Roussel 1915–16: 194–95 accurately identified their correspondence to the Egyptian material. Bruneau 1970: 167–68 notes that this type of offering was also found at other sanctuaries on Delos. See also Van Straten 1981: 83, fig. 11. For other examples of this kind of dedication outside Egypt, see *RICIS* 113/0202, 0529, 0543, 0550–0551, 302/0203, 511/0601, 607/0101. For numerous examples and a discussion of the function of model ears and hearing-ear stelae in Egyptian religion see Pinch 1993: 246–53, 260–64, pls. 2, 6, 8, 14, 55, 56 and Wagner and Quaegebeur 1973: 55–58.

¹⁸⁴ Siard 2002: 137–40; Soukiassian 1983.

¹⁸⁵ Roussel 1915–16: 19–69 gives a description of the Sarapieia and general observations on the architectural style. See also Vallois 1944: 85–86, 93–96, and Siard 2002.

¹⁸⁶ The above-mentioned Egyptian sculpture bears a hieroglyphic inscription, but it is not connected to the Delian context. Though it is possible that a few individuals such as the priests of Sarapieion A may have been able to read the text, it would generally have had only visual significance.

¹⁸⁷ Thermouthris (Θερμούθρις) is mentioned as the dedicator of an object recorded in the inventory of Kallistratos (156/5 BCE). See Roussel 1915–16: 223. Thaesis, daughter of Neilos (Θαῖσις Νείλου) appears as a subscriber in CE 168 (= *RICIS* 202/0212), col. 1, line 23 (dated to end of second, beginning of first century BCE). Horus, discussed further below, appears in CE 15, 15bis and 16 (= *RICIS* 202/0197–0199).

course, can be misleading indicators of identity, as the Greek names of the elder Apollonios and his descendants show, but ethnic designations generally confirm the above picture of a predominantly Greek milieu. When an ethnic is used, the individual usually hails from a Greek city. Non-Greek ethnics do occur, though there are few Egyptian designations. The important exceptions are the lineage of Apollonios, and the Horus just mentioned, who describes himself as Κασιώτης, probably from Kasion near Pelusion in the northeast Delta.¹⁸⁸ The other non-Greeks identifying themselves ethnically are Phoenicians, Romans, and Macedonians. There are enough individuals recorded in the inscriptions to provide broad statistical approximations of the ethnic make-up of the different sanctuaries in the period of the conflict described in the aretology (i.e. before 166 BCE).¹⁸⁹ In all cases, Greek names and ethnicities predominate by a large margin. The only significant variation in this regard appears to be in the relative proportion of non-Greek minorities, which is somewhat higher at Sarapieion A (19% versus 3% at B and 5% at C).¹⁹⁰ Even if this cannot be taken as airtight evidence of “actual” ethnicities, it certainly represents (not surprisingly) the salience of non-Greek ethnical self-identification in the epigraphical records at Sarapieion A, especially among the priests.

Perhaps least visible in the archaeological and epigraphical evidence are the differences and similarities in religious practice between the sanctuaries, but a few observations can be made. The principal divinities at all three are Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis, but in dedicatory inscriptions they are joined by a crowd of others. The names of Greek gods are attested at every

¹⁸⁸ Horus Κασιώτης appears in *CE* 15, 15bis and 16 (= *RICIS* 202/0197–0199). According to Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica* (s.v. Κάσιον), the ethnic Κασιώτης was related to Κάσιον, the name of both a mountain and a town near Pelusium. On this area, see Carrez-Maratray 1999. Horus of Kasion is associated in the inscriptions of Sarapieion A with Zeus Kasios and Tachnepsis, divinities local to Mount Kasios and Pelusion, whose cult he may have brought to Delos.

¹⁸⁹ Any statistical argument based on the data available must, of course, be treated with extreme caution. The usual caveats about the influences of epigraphical custom and the capriciousness of preservation apply, but let me also outline briefly some of the assumptions behind my figures. I have chosen the period before 166 BCE since it better reflects the political circumstances of the period of Delian independence in which the conflict actually occurred than would the entire corpus of material, including that of the period of renewed Athenian domination after 166 BCE. Data from Sarapieion C in the latter period is heavily distorted by the presence of 112 Athenians in the official records pertaining to that sanctuary. The circumstances after 166 BCE are an important but separate historical question which I will treat below. The figures I have given reflect a basic division between Greek and non-Greek on the following (relatively cautious) principles. Included among the Greeks are all those individuals who identify themselves with the ethnic of a Greek city, or who simply have a Greek name and no other identifying characteristics. Those included among the non-Greeks are those with explicit non-Greek ethnics and non-Greek names.

¹⁹⁰ The other significant (but somewhat unexpected) result of this statistical investigation was the relatively low level of ethnic reporting in the inscriptions of Sarapieion B.

sanctuary. Whether they are understood as equivalents to Egyptian gods or as separate divinities is not always clear.¹⁹¹ Other prominent Egyptian gods, such as Osiris and Harpocrates, are also known, along with occasional names and epithets which have a more local significance within Egypt. At Sarapieion A, dedications were made to Zeus Kasios and Tachnepsis (Isis of Kasion, according to *P.Oxy.* 1380.74–75),¹⁹² while at C, Sarapis of Kanopos and Isis Taposirias were honored.¹⁹³ The abundant evidence for these heterogeneous and individualistic devotions is not matched by that of the more organized, collective rites conducted at the sanctuaries, and the latter must be reconstructed for the most part from scattered and allusive indications. The monument of Apollonios does, however, explicitly mention some practices at Sarapieion A familiar to Egyptian religion in the Greek and Roman world: offerings of incense, collective ritual meals, and, of course, dream divination.¹⁹⁴ The names of associations and cult officials, as well as inventories and other records suggest that these were also part of the rites and services at the other Sarapieia.¹⁹⁵

As at other sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods outside Egypt, sources of water appear to have been important to the liturgy practiced at the sanctuaries on Delos, but in relation to this fundamental ritual element the Delian Sarapieia do exhibit significant differences. All three are located close to one another in the Inopos river valley and on the “Terrasse des dieux étrangers” (see fig. 3)¹⁹⁶ but Sarapieion A seems to have made the most of contemporary mythological and poetical connections between the Inopos and the Nile. Callimachus, in his *Hymn to Delos*, describes the waters of the Inopos as originating with the Nile, and in the *Hymn to Artemis*, he calls the river “Egyptian Inopos.” Lycophron likewise equates the waters of the Inopos with those of the Nile, and ancient commentators claimed that the Inopos rose and fell in the same rhythm as the Egyptian

¹⁹¹ See Roussel 1915–16: 279. At Sarapieion A: Nike, Aphrodite, Eros Nikephoros, Dionysos; Sarapieion B: Heros, Artemis Phosphoros; Sarapieion C: Herakles Apallaxikakos, Asclepius, Hygieia, Eleusinian Demeter and Kore, Zeus Kynthios, Zeus Ktesios, Zeus Soter, Pluto, Hermes, Dionysos, Aphrodite, Artemis-Hekate, Artemis Hagia, Dioskouroi, Athena, Pan.

¹⁹² *CE* 16, 16bis (= *RICIS* 202/0199–0200); the text of *P.Oxy.* 1380 is included in Totti 1985: 62–75. On the cults of Zeus Kasios and Isis at Pelusion, see Carrez-Maratray 1999: 423, 426–28. These cults were probably introduced to Sarapieion A by Horus of Kasion (see above, pp. 199–200).

¹⁹³ Sarapis of Kanopos: *CE* 157, 199 (= *RICIS* 202/0321–0322, 202/0370); Isis Taposirias: *CE* 142 (= *RICIS* 202/0313).

¹⁹⁴ Maiistas mentions “smoky offerings” (line 40), and “fragrant altars” (line 63). Sarapieion A included a communal dining room furnished with marble benches for the “god-summoned feasts” (line 65), on which see Engelmann 1975: *ad loc.*

¹⁹⁵ For overviews of the limited evidence of cult practices in these sanctuaries, see Roussel 1915–16: 285–93, and Dunand 1973: 2.100–8.

¹⁹⁶ Nearby was also a sanctuary of the Syrian gods. See Bruneau et al. 2005: 267–81 and dépliant V.

river.¹⁹⁷ Excavations have revealed that the builders of Sarapieion A actually cut a channel leading from the lower reservoir of the Inopos, under the outer wall of the sanctuary to the *naos* (see fig. 4). Stairs from the interior of the *naos* led down to this source of sacred water,¹⁹⁸ which must have played the liturgical role of the Egyptian Nile as the primeval waters of creation. By contrast, Sarapieion B included a covered cistern, which was not directly connected to the Inopos, and had to be filled artificially.¹⁹⁹ No physical evidence of a water source came to light in the excavation of Sarapieion C, though a late inscription (dated 116/5 BCE) records the dedication of a fountain or well.²⁰⁰ Sarapieion A, then, occupied a unique position among the Delian sanctuaries. Located on the bank of a heterotopic Nile, this temple allowed its priests to make Delos a home away from home, and to reimagine a Greek sacred landscape as Egypt in miniature.

This difference in orientation toward the Egyptian homeland of Sarapis and his associates is most evident, however, in the social and political organization of the Sarapieia – the domain in which Apollonios and Maiistas took great pains to distinguish their sanctuary and its priesthood. Sarapieion A was the only sanctuary to maintain a hereditary priesthood in accordance with principles derived from Egyptian tradition. The one exception to this pattern of priestly authority only confirms the traditionalism of the sanctuary, and its maintenance of connections with Egypt. Shortly before the beginning of Athenian domination in 166 BCE, a new officiant appears in the inscriptions as “overseer of the temple” (ἐπιμελόμενος τοῦ ἱεροῦ): the Egyptian Horus of Kasion mentioned above. He was likely responsible for introducing to Sarapieion A the Pelusian triad of the Great God, Zeus Kasios, and Tachnepsis, whose worship was centered in the portico on the north side of the sanctuary (see fig. 4).²⁰¹ An inscription dedicated to these

¹⁹⁷ Callim. *Hymn* 4.206–8: Ἴνω ποῖο παρὰ ῥόον ὃν τε βάθιστον | γαῖα τότ’ ἐξανήσιν, ὅτε πλήθοντι ῥέεθρον | Νεῖλος ἀπὸ κρημνοῖο κατέρχεται Αἰθιοπῆος; *Hymn* 3.171: ἀρχόθι πηγῶν Αἰγυπτίου Ἴνω ποῖο. Lycoph. *Alex.* 574–76: Κυνθίαν ὅσοι σκοπὴν | μῖμοντες ἡλάσκουσιν Ἴνω ποῦ πέλας. The scholia to both Callimachus and Lycophron suggest that the water of the Nile made its way through unknown passages and emerged on Delos as the Inopos; the scholia to Lycophron even report that the Inopos flooded at the same time as the Nile; Plin. *HN* 2.229 also mentions this phenomenon. See also Paus. 2.5.3 and Strabo 6.271. On the currency of these references on Delos, see Bruneau 1970: 16–17.

¹⁹⁸ The canal is described by Roussel 1915–16: 20, and indicated in pl. 1. For more recent excavations and analysis of this canal, see Siard 1998.

¹⁹⁹ Roussel 1915–16: 45.

²⁰⁰ *CE* 113 (= *RICIS* 202/0279). On water in the various Sarapieia, see Roussel 1915–16: 286–87. Dunand 1973: 2.105–6 downplays the differences between A, B, and C. See also Siard 1998 and Siard 2002: 142–44. Sources of water figured prominently in several sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods in the Graeco-Roman world, on which see Wild 1981.

²⁰¹ On this figure, see Mora 1990: 1.126. For the inscriptions and commentary, Roussel 1915–16: 94–97.

gods was embedded in the wall beside the door leading into this area, and it included an injunction clearly aimed at maintaining the ritual purity of the space. Women are prohibited along with men dressed in wool.²⁰² Such doorpost injunctions to purity are typical of sanctuaries in Egypt, and are generally directed toward the priests entering the temple to perform the temple liturgy.²⁰³ The new priestly figure at Sarapieion A and his innovations appear to reassert the traditionalism typical of the priestly lineage of Apollonios.

The other sanctuaries organized their affiliates and established their hierarchies otherwise. At Sarapieion B, two individuals are mentioned who held the preeminent title of priest (ἱερεύς): Lampron in one of the earliest inscriptions, and a certain Kineas in several inscriptions that are probably somewhat later. Kineas, a Delian attested in other inscriptions, has the patronymic Ἀγοράλλου (son of Agorallous), but there is no evidence of any connection with his predecessor, or any subsequent priests.²⁰⁴ Far more prominent in the inscriptions of this site are a large number of cult associations. While Sarapieion A did have an association of *Therapeutai*, who presumably held common meals in the dining chamber and contributed to the temple, Sarapieion B seems to have specialized in this type of communal organization, and was home to no less than seven associations, most of which are identified as collectives (κοινά): the *Eranistai*, the *Therapeutai*, the *Melanēphoroi*, the *Thiasos of Sarapiastai*, the *Dekadistai* and *Dekadistriai*, the *Enatistai* and the *Thiasitai*.²⁰⁵ There is mention of *Therapeutai* at Sarapieion C, as well as a group of “contributors” (συμβολόμενοι), and the occasional individual *melanēphoros* who may have been part of a larger group, but associations do not seem to have played as significant a role at Sarapieion C. The latter sanctuary followed the Greek pattern of annual priesthoods, as is evident from inventories of offerings, in which dedicatory inscriptions are dated according to individual priesthoods. From an inventory created by the Delian archon Kallistratos in 156/5 BCE, ten

²⁰² CE16 (= *RICIS* 202/0199), ll. 6–7; CE16bis (= *RICIS* 202/0200), ll. 9–10: γυναῖκα μὴ προσάγειν | μηδὲ ἐν ἐρέοις ἄνδρα.

²⁰³ For examples from Edfu, see Chassinat 1928: 360.12–362.4 and 1930: 343.13–344.11. See also below, pp. 257–58.

²⁰⁴ Lampron: CE 20 (= *RICIS* 202/0134); see Mora 1990: 1.80–81. Kineas: CE 21–24 (*RICIS* 202/0135–8); see Mora 1990: 1.76.

²⁰⁵ ἐρανισταί (CE 20), τὸ κοινὸν τῶν θεραπειτῶν (CE 21), τὸ κοινὸν τῶν μελανηφόρων (CE 21), ὁ θίασος τῶν Σαραπιαστῶν (CE 21), τὸ κοινὸν τῶν δεκαδιστῶν καὶ δεκαδιστριῶν (CE 25 = *RICIS* 202/0139), τὸ κοινὸν τῶν ἐνατιστῶν (CE 26–27 = *RICIS* 202/0140–1), τὸ κοινὸν τῶν θιασιτῶν. On these associations, see Roussel 1915–16: 253–55 and Dunand 1973: 2.107–8, who also noted (89) the predominance of cult associations at B. The importance of such social organizations perhaps explains the lack of ethnic identifications among the adherents.

names of priests are known whose terms of office were prior to 166 BCE.²⁰⁶ According to the official acts of the *hieropoioi*, the magistrates in charge of the economic administration of the Delian sanctuaries, Sarapieion C began to enjoy official supervision and patronage around 190–180 BCE. This included taking deposit of offerings and contributing money to the upkeep and repair of buildings. By 179 BCE, the latter duties were in the charge of a *neokoros* chosen by lot from among the Delian citizens.²⁰⁷ Sarapieion C, though a sanctuary of the Egyptian gods, and exhibiting to some degree the corresponding cultural *indicia*, was more closely affiliated with the Greek political structures on the island than Sarapieion A, and organized its priesthood accordingly.

The cleavage between Sarapieion A and the official state-run sanctuary would manifest itself even more clearly in the turmoil which ensued when the Athenians, benefiting from the favor of Rome because of their loyalty to her during the Third Macedonian War (172–168 BCE), were given control of Delos in 166 BCE. The Sarapieion founded by Apollonios again faced legal and political hostility, this time from both Delians and the Athenian prefect (ἐπαρχος). The priest of Sarapieion A, Demetrios – most likely the son of Apollonios and thus the fourth generation of the priestly lineage – made an astute appeal to the Romans, who obligingly intervened on his behalf with the Athenian authorities. Demetrios erected a stele in Sarapieion A with a copy of the letter from the Athenian *stratēgoi* to the governor of Delos and the text of the *senatus consultum* regarding the sanctuary.²⁰⁸ This inscription contains a suggestive phrase which may indicate the nature of the matter under dispute in this second episode of conflict. The letter to the governor Charmides records the decision not to hinder Demetrios “from opening the temple and serving it as

²⁰⁶ See Bricault 1996: 610–11.

²⁰⁷ The relevant parts of the “Acts of the Hieropoioi” are excerpted in Roussel 1915–16: 207–8. On the official character of Sarapieion C, *ibid.*, 255–56, 258–60. Dunand 1973: 95–96 casts doubt on the *neokoros* of the Sarapieion, since the office is mentioned only once. Nevertheless, the individual who holds this office is well attested elsewhere. See Mora 1990: 1.11.

²⁰⁸ CE 14 (= *RICIS* 202/0195). See also the text and commentary in Dürrbach 1921: 116–21, and the brief discussion in Habicht 1997: 255–56. An attempt has been made recently by de Rossi 2000 to redate the inscription to 58 or 52 BCE. His argument is not convincing, since it rests primarily on the mention of “Delians” in the *senatus consultum*, and the fact that Delian citizens were expelled after the Athenian takeover and this citizen status did not return until later. The term, however, could very well refer to the Delians who were permitted to remain on the island under various juridical designations after 166 BCE (on which see Baslez 1976). Whether or not the use of this term refers to the particular citizen status necessary for de Rossi’s argument to have any weight is uncertain, (a) because it is part of the complaint of Demetrios, who may have used “Delians” in a non-technical sense or to cast suspicion on the status of his opponents, or alternatively (b) because the term occurs in the text of the *senatus consultum*, which shows signs of having been translated from Latin (see below, n. 211), and therefore may represent a non-technical usage on the part of the Roman authorities.

before” (μὴ κωλύειν αὐτὸν ἀνοίγειν καὶ θεραπεύειν τὸ ἱερὸν καθάπερ καὶ πρότερον – ll. 7–10). The decree affirms Demetrios’ right to open the temple and conduct worship as he had done previously, but the present infinitive ἀνοίγειν “to open” means not simply to reopen the temple after its closure (in which case one would expect an aorist), but “to keep open,” i.e. to open it repeatedly or continually.²⁰⁹ The text of the *senatus consultum* likewise seems most concerned with granting Demetrios permission to worship in the same manner as he had previously done.²¹⁰ In some way, official or not, certain Delians and the Athenian prefect had apparently attempted to hinder this worship.²¹¹ Again, there is no way of knowing exactly who these Delians were, but it seems telling that there is no evidence that any such action was taken or provoked against Sarapieia B or C. On the contrary, while Sarapieion B seems to have continued quietly or perhaps declined somewhat, the Athenians took over C and administered it as a public sanctuary, appointing Athenian priests each year according to the traditional order of the Athenian tribes.²¹² The difference in the organization of the priesthood at each sanctuary and the basis of its authority could not have been more plain. While Sarapieion C became integrated into the Athenian administration of Delos, the descendants of Apollonios continued to tend their private sanctuary and maintain their priestly position as a matter of heritage.²¹³ One of the latest inscriptions from Sarapieion A mentions the priest Demetrios, son of Demetrios, apparently the fifth generation in the lineage.²¹⁴

CONCLUSION

The circumstantial evidence of differences between the Sarapieia on Delos, and of the divergent trajectories that A and C continued to take under the Athenian domination, suggests that Maiistas may have referred to some

²⁰⁹ The present infinitive perhaps also evokes the daily liturgy fundamental to the Egyptian temple service, and carried out by members of a permanent priesthood. See Roussel 1913: 319 n. 2; Baslez 1977: 214–15.

²¹⁰ CE 14 (RICIS 202/0195), ll. 30–37: περὶ τούτου τοῦ πράγματος οὕτως ἔδοξεν· καθὼς τὸ πρότερον θεράπευεν, ἔνεκεν ἡμῶν θεραπεύειν ἔξεστιν, τοῦ μὴ τι ὑπεναντίον τῷ τῆς συγκλήτου δόγματι γένηται· ἔδοξεν.

²¹¹ This is recorded in the *senatus consultum* as part of the complaint of Demetrios (CE 14, ll. 27–30): Δηλίους δὲ κωλύειν καὶ τὸν ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν ἐπαρχὸν παραγινόμενον ᾧ ἔλασσον θεραπεύει. The latter phrase (ᾧ ἔλασσον θεραπεύει) is interesting, since it seems unusual for Greek idiom and is probably a calque on the Latin conjunction *quominus*.

²¹² Roussel 1915–16: 124, 263–71; Bricault 1996.

²¹³ According to Roussel 1913: 317–20 the Athenians tried to close the private Sarapieion A because it was in competition with Sarapieion C.

²¹⁴ CE 18 (= RICIS 202/0202).

conspiracy on the part of the sanctuary's two rivals when he wrote of "a windy double lawsuit" brought against Apollonios and his sanctuary (Δίκη ἀνεμωλίωι . . . δοιῶ – ll. 67–68). Though the legal action may have stemmed from some private grudge, it seems plausible that rivalry between the Sarapieia may also have contributed to the conflict. What is most important, however, is that Apollonios and Maiistas portrayed the episode of the trial as a conflict whose result vindicated the legitimacy or even the "authenticity" of the sanctuary and its priests. The differences among the sanctuaries are, therefore, critical to understanding the monument of Apollonios not only as an Egyptian priest's testimonial to the power of Sarapis, but as a document of priestly self-representation among a plurality of approaches to Egyptian religion within a predominantly Greek context.

The text, as I have argued, is as much priestly apologetic as divine aretology. The latter generic definition has, however, obscured important aspects of the former, since it assumes that the orientation and function of the text were primarily *external*: praise of the Egyptian god Sarapis in order to elevate his prestige and promote his cult in the wider Greek world. The way the text represents the conflict on Delos, however (along with the evidence of differences between the Sarapieia), suggests that the apologetic dimension of the text had an *internal* orientation.²¹⁵ According to Apollonios and Maiistas, the story of the trial on Delos was not about overcoming Greek resistance to Egyptian religion, but about the legitimacy and authenticity of the priest and his sanctuary, and the divine favor they enjoyed relative to others in the neighborhood.²¹⁶ The message of the narrative, therefore, was more likely directed toward the community of adherents at Sarapieion A, and/or the more general group of devotees to the Egyptian gods, rather than the population of Delos at large. The humble size of the pillar and its location within the bounds of a private sanctuary (as opposed to a public place) suggest that, in the first instance, this audience consisted of visitors to the sanctuary itself.

This orientation reveals a more complex picture of the politics of "syncretism" and identity in the history of Egyptian cults on Delos than the one painted by narratives of cultural assimilation. Apollonios' monument together with its context suggests possible divisions and even conflict among the cults of the Egyptian gods on Delos in their approaches to

²¹⁵ The apologetic dimensions of the text and their internal orientation could be compared to the diasporic tensions between Jewish identity and Hellenism that are negotiated by the author of the *Letter of Aristeas*. See Tcherikover 1958 and (for his more general argument concerning Jewish apologetic literature) 1956.

²¹⁶ On this use of "miracle" and its interpretation to differentiate inside and outside groups, see Smith 1978: 190–207, esp. pp. 202–4 on the life of Pythagoras.

negotiating a position within a predominantly Greek cultural context. The evidence is far from complete, but the way Apollonios and especially Maiistas distinguish Sarapieion A and its priestly lineage is revealing. Cultural assimilation in terms of adopting Greek language or cultural idiom was not a critical issue for them; it certainly did not preclude their own claims to authenticity or even Egyptian identity. Apollonios wrote in Greek while asserting his identity and the legitimacy of his priesthood through diasporic versions of Egyptian discourses. Maiistas' hymn, moreover, with its dual appeal to Greek and Egyptian myths, can be read as a sophisticated, literary approach to the problem of claiming authenticity from a position of cultural hybridity. Since Apollonios claimed descent from an Egyptian priest and ancestral connections to Egypt, his arguments could be described as ethnical rather than cultural, but this is not entirely adequate either, since the dominant trope is as much kingship as kinship. The text, with its stories of dream commands and its evocation of Osirian myth, adapts traditional narratives of royal piety and legitimate succession to explain the favored status and authority of a lineage (or "dynasty") of Egyptian priests in a place of diaspora where their position was guaranteed neither by king nor by social hierarchy – a place where they received their orders and their offices through a direct connection to the gods themselves.²¹⁷ For Apollonios and Maiistas, in other words, "syncretism" seems to have been an ongoing problem of social and political affiliations and the consequences of those affiliations for the structure of religious authority, rather than a simple matter of assimilating in order to win acceptance in the Greek world. The strategies they employed in asserting legitimacy also suggest that these Egyptian priests – far from being unconsciously "Hellenized" by the Greek social and cultural environment of Delos – had an acute and sophisticated awareness of the position they occupied between cultures.

Again, only tentative conclusions can be reached about the specific history of Egyptian religion on Delos, but it is clear that the conventional narrative of Sarapis' introduction and the mechanisms by which his cult spread and developed must be revised to allow for a more complex reading of the politics of syncretism. As an exemplary micro-history, the story told by Apollonios and Maiistas should also, in turn, complicate the historian's approach to other narratives of syncretism and the spread of Egyptian religion. At the very least, it is never as easy as A–B–C.

²¹⁷ In addition to inheritance, the other legitimate means of acquiring a priesthood in Egyptian tradition was by grant of the pharaoh.

Thessalos and the magic of empire

Mysterious and austere, dressed in white linen, head shaved, wise in the ways of magic and divination, the Egyptian priest, known since Herodotus as a fount of ancient wisdom, reappeared in a new literary guise when Egypt, the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms, was made into a province of the Roman empire. Greek and Latin texts – some purely fictional, some professing to tell of actual events – revealed the Egyptian priest as a learned magician, capable of foretelling the future, making the dead speak, consorting with gods, and producing all kinds of powerful effects with spells and magical substances. He could also, at times, impart his esoteric knowledge to others. Egypt became not only a place of deep history and of the distant origins of gods, rites, and doctrines, it was also an archive and school of the occult for those who sought magical knowledge in the present. That, at any rate, was the claim made by the author of a treatise *De virtutibus herbarum*, a work on astrological botany and one of the more unusual documents to acquire importance in the history of Hellenism.¹ Though one of several technical works on the magical properties of plants and stones preserved from antiquity – works rarely studied outside of specialist disciplines – this particular one has long had a prominent place in the study of religious life in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The interest in this treatise was provoked by its autobiographical prologue, in which the author, a certain Thessalos, explains how he gained his knowledge of magic through a divine revelation that he procured with the help of a native priest in the Upper Egyptian city of Thebes.

¹ The most recent edition is that of Friedrich 1968, and I have followed his book divisions and section numbers throughout. For ease of reference, I have also provided Friedrich's page numbers. Unless otherwise noted, Greek quotations are from *Codex Matritensis Bibl. nat.* 4631 (T in Friedrich), the only Greek manuscript of the Thessalos narrative. The text of this manuscript is translated in Appendix II. For a more detailed discussion of the manuscripts, see below. On the attribution to Thessalos of Tralles, see the discussion below.

The prologue takes the form of an epistle addressed to the Roman emperor, in which Thessalos claims to have outstripped all others in the search for the miraculous.² After pursuing a typical Greek education in letters with great success in Asia Minor, Thessalos sailed to Alexandria with a large amount of money, and set about acquiring a higher education from the most accomplished scholars there, and he also attended the lectures of the dialectical physicians (διαλεκτικοί ἰατροί).³ When his studies had progressed, and his homeward voyage was approaching, he made the rounds of the libraries in Alexandria. In his research, he came upon a book by the wise Egyptian king Nechepso, containing twenty-four remedies based on the use of stones and plants for every part of the body and every disease arranged according to the signs of the zodiac. The book promised amazing results, but when Thessalos tried to put the remedies of Nechepso into practice, he failed completely – a failure made all the more disastrous by a hasty proclamation of his discovery to friends and relations in Asia Minor. Rather than face the ridicule of his Alexandrian colleagues, or the disappointed expectations of the folks back home, he consigned himself to wandering in Egypt, praying all the time for divine assistance, until he either fulfilled his rash promises in some way or died.

Eventually, he arrived in ancient Thebes (Diospolis Magna), a city filled with temples and learned priests. He spent some time there befriending the priests, and inquiring whether anything of magical power (τι τῆς μαγικῆς ἐνεργείας) still survived.⁴ Most of them, he discovered, made promises no better than his own rash pronouncements in Alexandria, but one priest did not disappoint him, a man who could be trusted because of his age and seriousness. This high priest claimed to be able to produce a direct divine vision by means of a bowl (i.e. through lekanomancy). Thessalos drew him aside, and in a quiet, secluded sacred precinct in one of the most deserted parts of the city, he tearfully implored the priest to help him in his predicament. Though surprised by the Greek doctor's sudden and desperate request, the priest agreed, and instructed Thessalos to maintain purity for three days. At dawn on the third day, Thessalos met the priest, who had prepared a pure chamber and everything else necessary for the vision. Thessalos was also prepared: unknown to the priest he had

² Thessalos I prooem.1–33 (Friedrich 1968: 45–61).

³ Thessalos I prooem. 5 (Friedrich 1968: 47). Glen Bowersock has suggested to me that the “dialectical doctors” were forerunners of the popular lecturers on medicine who would later be called *iatrosophists*. For medical lectures as part of the intellectual world of the Second Sophistic, see Bowersock 1969: 59–75.

⁴ Thessalos I prooem. 13 (Friedrich 1968: 49).

concealed papyrus and ink on his person! When the priest asked Thessalos with whom he would like to converse – some spirit of the dead, or a god – Thessalos replied “Asclepius” and that it would be the perfection of his kindness if he would entrust him to speak one on one with the divinity. The priest was not pleased at this request, and his face showed it, but since he had promised, he agreed to carry out the necessary rite. He seated Thessalos before the place where the god was to appear. Invoking the god’s ineffable names, he summoned Asclepius (the Greek name given to the Egyptian god Imhotep), and left Thessalos closed up in the pure chamber.

Soon Asclepius appeared in a spectacular vision, promising honor and glory to Thessalos, and inviting him to ask whatever he wished. Though stunned by the epiphany, Thessalos recovered his wits enough to ask why he had failed with Nechepso’s remedies. The god responded that King Nechepso, endowed with great virtue and intelligence, had observed the sympathies of plants and stones, but since he had not obtained his knowledge from a divine voice, he was not aware of the correct times at which to pick the plants. According to Thessalos, Asclepius then expounded briefly, but in quite technical terms, the importance of time and place to the medicinal powers of plants, referring to astrological and physical doctrines such as the nativity of the world and celestial emanations, and proving his point with a discussion of the varying power of hemlock (κόνειον).⁵ Then, almost seamlessly, the revelation carries on into the substance of the treatise, beginning with the twelve plants assigned to the zodiac, the times they should be harvested, their preparations and their uses.

As the frame for the more technical material of the treatise, Thessalos’ story explicitly raises and addresses the problem of the text’s authority and authenticity.⁶ It is this issue that lies at the heart of its importance as “one of the most precious texts for an understanding of the religious life of Late Antiquity”⁷ and in particular the conditions under which authoritative religious and magical knowledge could be obtained in the Hellenistic age. Scholars have not, however, thoroughly examined the way that Thessalos’

⁵ Thessalos I prooem. 29–34 (Friedrich 1968: 58–61). Note that the further instructions given in I prooem. 35–39 (Friedrich 1968: 61–64), which contradict the subsequent discussions of the plants of the zodiac, were most likely interpolated into the manuscript tradition from another source. See Friedrich 1968: 22–23.

⁶ Hansen 2003: 310–11 describes the narrative as an authentication strategy of “heavy pseudo-documentarism” but his treatment focuses on the supposed identity of Thessalos as a famous doctor, the exclusivity of the knowledge in the treatise, and its divine source rather than on the important figure of Nechepso.

⁷ Smith 1978: 172.

narrative represents the knowledge of the treatise as authentically Egyptian.⁸ In this chapter, I reexamine Thessalos' story for what it reveals about the encounter between Egyptian civilization, Hellenism, and the Roman empire, and especially the consequences of that encounter for Egyptian cultural identity. To do this, it is vital to ask: Who is Thessalos? Who does he claim to be? And how does he authorize and authenticate the magical knowledge that he presents in the text? In the first part of this investigation, I reconsider the history of this remarkable text, the identity of the author, and the scholarly reception of the text. Following on this, I explore the generic forms that Thessalos adopts, his relationship to Egyptian traditions of knowledge, and how Thessalos defines both himself and the knowledge he claims to transmit through his autobiographical narrative.

WHO IS THESSALOS? THE AUTHOR AND HIS DATES

Modern scholarly interest centers almost entirely on the Thessalos narrative rather than on the work's astrobotanical content, but the surviving manuscripts and fragments of Thessalos' treatise suggest that almost all prior interest – whether in Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, or the Renaissance – was in inverse proportion. The main text of the treatise appears to have undergone several recensions, reworkings, and reattributions which in many cases dispensed with all or most of the Thessalos narrative, and attributed the rest to other authoritative figures: Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Alexander the Great, or Harpokration of Alexandria.⁹ The result is that only one version of the Greek text with Thessalos' introductory narrative has survived: in a manuscript copied in 1474 by Konstantinos Laskaris and now in the national library at Madrid. Fortunately, a Latin translation including the narrative was also produced at least as early as the thirteenth century and survives in four closely related manuscript versions.¹⁰ This variegated manuscript tradition and the

⁸ Important steps have, however, been taken towards this goal, notably R. Ritner's criticism of J. Z. Smith, and Fowden's use of the Thessalos text to evoke the Egyptian context of the *Hermetica*. Both are discussed below. Also note Cumont 1918: 102–7. This chapter also reopens and reframes questions I have explored in earlier essays (Moyer 2003a, 2003b).

⁹ These various traditions are discussed by Friedrich 1968. See also Pingree 1976, 1992. On the manuscripts attributing the material to Hermes Trismegistus, see Friedrich 1968: 25–35. On fragments attributed to Orpheus by the sixth-century CE physician Aëtius of Amida (Kern fr. 325–26), see Friedrich 1968: 35–36. On the attribution to Alexander, see Friedrich 1968: 24 n. 2. The accidental attribution to Harpokration is discussed below, and further references are given in the notes.

¹⁰ The Greek text is in Codex Matritensis Bibl. nat. 4631 (formerly 110), fos. 75–79^v (T in Friedrich). Of the four versions of the Latin translation, only Codex Montepessulanus fac. med. 277, fos. 31–35^v

history of its interpretation have made identifying the author of the treatise on even the most fundamental level a complicated problem.

The first manuscript of the Thessalos narrative to come to the attention of scholars was the Madrid codex, described in a catalogue produced in 1769 by Juan Iriarte, and first published by Charles Graux in 1878 as a “Letter from Harpokration to an Emperor.”¹¹ In the Madrid manuscript, the Thessalos text immediately follows a version of another occult treatise, the *Kyranides* attributed to Harpokration, with the result that the salutation of the letter has become corrupted, and reads “Harpokration to Caesar Augustus, greetings” (Ἀρποκρατίων Καίσαρι Αὐγουστῶ χαίρειν).¹² Though the manuscript contains the entire prologue and the first book up to the fourth chapter (breaking off part way through a discussion of the plant under the sign of Cancer), Graux published only the epistolary prologue.¹³ Reflecting on the themes he saw in the narrative, he suggested that the emperor to which the letter was addressed was Julian “the Apostate,” a known student of theurgical arts, putting the text in the middle of the fourth century CE.¹⁴ Several years later, Pierre Boudreaux produced a more complete edition of the text for the *Catalogus Codicum Astrologorum Graecorum*.¹⁵ Though Boudreaux still attributed the text to Harpokration, he pointed out some difficulties with this authorship, and the date proposed by Graux.¹⁶ Harpokration was from Alexandria, while the author of the autobiographical narrative in the Madrid manuscript traveled to Alexandria from his home in Asia Minor. He also suggested, albeit on the basis of Harpokration’s authorship, that a date in the second century CE was more probable. Most important of all, however, Boudreaux drew attention to a fourteenth-century manuscript in the Vatican which quoted

(fourteenth century) was known to Friedrich. For descriptions of the other three and an overview of scholarship on the Latin translations of the Thessalos tradition, see Pingree 1992: 330–31. The three manuscripts containing versions of the Latin translation of the Thessalos narrative are: London, British Library Add. 41623, fos. 128, 134, 133, 141, 140, 135 (fifteenth century); Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile 454, fos. 14–22 (sixteenth century); Vatican library, Pal. lat. 1277, fos. 1–7^v (sixteenth century). There are also medieval versions without the narrative, and a Late Antique translation of parts of the Thessalos text (excluding the narrative frame and the dates for picking the plants). On the Latin translations, see (in addition to Friedrich 1968) Sconocchia 1976: 265–68; 1984; 1996, and Ferraces Rodríguez 2004. The Late Antique Latin translation may have been derived from a Greek version of the text without the narrative or dates. Such a text appears to be the source for the Antinoopolis Illustrated Herbal (*P.Johnson + P.Antin.* 3.214, late fourth/early fifth century CE), which ultimately derives its botanical information from the Thessalos tradition (Leith 2006).

¹¹ Graux 1878.

¹² Thessalos I prooem. 1. See Cumont 1918: 85–86, 98–99. The text of the *Kyranides* has been edited by Kaimakis 1976.

¹³ As far as I prooem. 36. Graux 1878: 69 explains his choice as follows: “cette partie du texte n’aurait présenté un intérêt bien vif que pour les adeptes, si tant est qu’il en existe encore . . .”

¹⁴ Graux 1878: 66–69. ¹⁵ Boudreaux 1912. ¹⁶ Boudreaux 1912: 133.

the discussion of hemlock found in the Madrid manuscript, but attributed it to Thessalos the Astrologer.¹⁷

Despite this clue, the attribution of the work to Thessalos was not established until Franz Cumont connected the Madrid manuscript and a manuscript in the medical library at Montpellier, which he realized contained an unedited Latin translation of the entire text under the title *Thessali philosophi de virtutibus herbarum*.¹⁸ The translation in the Montpellier manuscript, Cumont determined, followed the Greek text fairly closely, even if it sometimes lapsed into paraphrase, and it also appeared to give a corrupted translation of the original address to the emperor: “Thessalos the philosopher to German[ic]us Claudius, king and eternal god, greetings.”¹⁹ Thessalos, moreover, is named in Asclepius’ revelatory address to the author, confirming in part the Greek text of the Madrid manuscript, which had been identified as corrupt at this point by both Graux and Boudreaux.²⁰ With this new identification, Cumont reassessed the date of the Thessalos text. He argued for the first century CE, in part on very general grounds of the milieu suggested by the narrative and the astrological doctrines presented in the treatise, but also on the firmer basis of the name of the emperor “*Germanus Claudius*,” a corruption of Claudius Germanicus (i.e. Claudius or Nero, though Cumont favored the latter), and the harmonization of the dates of these last Julio-Claudians with the astronomical information contained in the treatise itself.²¹ Cumont then further specified the author of the text as the famous Greek doctor Thessalos of Tralles, who lived under the reign of Nero, and according to Galen wrote a letter to the emperor announcing his claim to have founded the medical sect of Methodism.²²

¹⁷ Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1144, fo. 243, cited by Boudreaux 1912: 134. ¹⁸ Cumont 1918.

¹⁹ Thessalos I prooem. 1 in M (Codex Montepessulanus fac. med. 277, Friedrich 1968: 46): *Thessalus philosophus Germano Claudio regi et deo eterno salutem et amorem*. On the greeting, see further below. The translation of the text as a whole is not always as close as Smith 1978: 173 seems to suggest. Cumont 1918: 88 assesses the translation as follows: “La traduction est littérale, sauf certaines suppressions, et elle s’efforce gauchement, sans toujours y parvenir, de rendre le sens de chaque mot, parfois en le paraphrasant.” For similar, but more recent assessments, see Sconocchia 1984, 1996.

²⁰ Graux 1878: 75 explains the name Θέσσωλε in the text as resulting from “some serious corruption, probably a lacuna.” See also Boudreaux 1912: 137, ll. 8–9. Though the name was proved correct, the phrase in question still required some correction by Cumont 1918: 90.

²¹ Cumont 1918: 91–96 discusses the general milieu of the text, and then (96–98) his astronomical arguments, on which see further below. Next (98–99), he notes that “*Germano Claudio*” in the salutation is probably a somewhat garbled translation of Κλαυδιῷ Γερμανικῷ, and could refer to the nomen and cognomen of both Claudius and Nero. Note also Codex Laurentianus 73.1, fol. 143r, which names a *Thessalus ex Nechepso* in a list of medical writers; see Wellmann 1900: 370.

²² Galen *De methodo medendi* I.2 (Kühn X, p. 7). Cumont 1918: 99–102. On Thessalos of Tralles, see Diller 1936.

Cumont's identification of the author of the treatise with Thessalos of Tralles has been disputed, however, and as a result some confusion regarding the date and historical circumstances of the text's composition has arisen. Hans Diller thought it unlikely that the Thessalos of the astrobotanical treatise was the Methodist doctor, since the testimonia concerning the latter do not mention astrological doctrines and the content of the astrobotanical treatise has no discernible connection with the medical sect of Methodism.²³ Thinking it too great a coincidence that the astrologer and the doctor could have the same name, he suggested that the epistolary prologue was a pseudonymous work on the model of Thessalos of Tralles' letter to Nero, forged and then affixed to an earlier treatise by Nechepso. The date of the Thessalos narrative would therefore fall sometime after Galen's notice, toward the end of the second century or later.²⁴ Other scholars, especially of ancient science and medicine, such as David Pingree, have accepted the idea of a Pseudo-Thessalos as the author and pushed the date of the text later, suggesting that the entire treatise was forged in the third or fourth centuries CE. Most recently, an article in the *Neue Pauly* encyclopedia placed the text in the fourth to sixth centuries CE.²⁵

There are, however, problems with these reconstructions, and the connection between Thessalos the Methodist doctor and Thessalos the author of the astrobotanical treatise, whether through identity or pseudonymity, is probably an illusion. In the first case, Cumont's argument that the intended addressee of the treatise was Nero is only one possible reading of the Latin salutation found in the medieval translation. This translation is not exact and in its paraphrases and glosses it does occasionally diverge from the Greek text of the Madrid manuscript, or even contradict it.²⁶ Even if

²³ Diller 1936: 181.

²⁴ Diller 1936: 181–82. See also Scott 1991: 110, who would date the text after Galen's *De methodo medendi* (composed 169–180 CE) and perhaps after Ps.-Galen, *Introductio* (composed after Galen's death in 199). Sconocchia (1984, 1996), on the other hand, favors Thessalos as the author and therefore a first-century CE date. Scarborough 1991: 156 n. 218 also argues for a date in the first century CE on the grounds that the recipes in the treatise refer to pepper and ginger, and that these spices were part of a first-century CE eastern trade. It should be noted, however, that the Red Sea trade through Egypt that was the main conduit for much of this trade continued to flourish in the second and third centuries CE (Rathbone 2007: 710–11).

²⁵ Pingree 1976: 83. Nutton 2002: 456 makes a brief mention of the text: "Eine weit verbreitete, Th. zugeschriebene Abh. über astrologische Heilkräuter ist jüngeren Datums (4.–6. Jh.). Die darin enthaltenen autobiographischen Daten und hermetischen Lehrmeinungen widersprechen allem, was wir ansonsten von Th. wissen." The dating is clearly based on the assumption that the text is pseudonymous and belongs vaguely to late antique Hermetism, a problematic assumption to be discussed below.

²⁶ A notable contradiction is the priest's departure from the pure house in the Madrid version of Thessalos I prooem. 23, which does not occur in the Montpellier manuscript. On this, see Friedrich

the Latin salutation to *Germanus Claudius* translates a Greek original it has certainly distorted its antecedent in some way, since the order of the emperor's names has been changed, and the vital "Nero" or "Tiberius" has been omitted.²⁷ The Greek here provides no further precision.²⁸ The greeting has been marked as corrupt owing to the name Harpokration (Ἀρποκρατίων), though the latter could perhaps be explained as a misreading, by Laskaris or a previous copyist, of Αὐτοκράτορι (i.e. *Imperator* or "emperor"). The original greeting, then, could well have read Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Αὐγούστῳ χαίρειν ("To emperor Caesar Augustus, greetings"), a plausible though unusual salutation to an emperor. The emperor in question, then, could be Augustus or, if specific names have dropped out, any of the imperial successors who assumed his titles.²⁹ At the very least, this greeting and the Latin translation suggest that the specific address to Nero is by no means a certainty.

1968: 17, 21. This passage as a whole also contains other omissions. In Thessalos I prooem. 6, the translator supplements the text, glossing *bibliothecas* as *locos, in quibus libri reperiuntur*. In Thessalos I prooem. 12, the Latin translation adds *et senes quam plures* to the priests who are in Thebes (resulting in Friedrich's supplement to the Greek text which may or may not be justified). When the Latin translation comes to the matter of the treatise, it records the dates of the sun's entry into the various zodiac signs only in Roman form, rather than in the Egyptian, Macedonian, and Roman calendars.

²⁷ Cumont 1918: 98 admits that "cette adresse est manifestement altérée" but argues that it still contains vital information. The more recently discovered manuscripts of the Latin translation, belonging to the same tradition, have a similar address. The salutation in both London, British Library Add. 41623 and in Vatican Library, Pal. lat. 1277 begins *Theselaus philosophus Germano Claudio regi*. See Pingree 1992: 330–31. The greeting *salutem et amorem* is a further clue to the corruption of the address. I have not been able to find a parallel to this phrase in a text earlier than the eleventh century CE, so it is likely a late addition.

²⁸ Cumont 1918: 90.

²⁹ The Greek translation Σεβαστός is much more common than the transliteration Αὔγουστος in the first two centuries of the Roman imperial period, but Augustus himself is referred to in this way at times. Notable examples for the present discussion are the three occurrences of Αὐγούστου Καίσαρος in the inscriptions of the Nilometer at Elephantine, one of which is dated 6/5 BCE (Bernard 1989: no. 251, c16, d24, d36 = SB 8392). Note also the subscript of Augustus to the Samians found at Aphrodisias, which begins Αὐτοκράτωρ Καίσαρ θεοῦ Ιουλίου υἱὸς Αὐγούστος Σαμίοις (this may be a second- or third-century gloss of Σεβαστός; see Reynolds 1982: 104–5). The transliteration also occurs in Luke 2:1. In the second century CE, Αὔγουστος becomes more common, and is used, e.g., by Pausanias. See Rougé 1969: 89–91; Bureth 1964: 24; Mason 1974: 12, 28. The sequence Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι [...] Αὐγούστῳ is unusual but this arrangement of titles is attested in inscriptions from Asia Minor and Scythia and a papyrus from the Fayyum: see IMT LApollon/Milet 2361 (123 or 131/2 CE): [Αὐτοκράτωρ Καί]σαρ Τραί[ανὸς Ἀδρι]ανὸς Αὐ[γού]στος; IScM III 99, ll. 2–3 (172 CE): Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι · Μ(άρκῳ) · Αὐρηλίῳ Ἀντωνείνῳ [Ἀρμενικῷ Παρθικῷ Μη]δικ(ῶ) Γερμανικῷ Αὐγούστῳ; BGU 1655, col. III, ll. 54–55 (169 CE): Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Ἀντωνίνῳ καὶ Οὐήρῳ Α[γού]στοις. Literary parallels to the greeting (though with specific names intact, and with Σεβαστός rather than Αὔγουστος) would be: Arrian *Periplus* 1 (Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Τραιανῷ Ἀδριανῷ Σεβαστῷ Ἀρριανὸς χαίρειν) or Aelius Aristides *Ἐπιστολὴ περὶ Σμύρνης* (Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Μάρκῳ Αὐρηλίῳ Ἀντωνίνῳ Σεβαστῷ καὶ αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι . . . Κομόδῳ Αἴλιος Ἀριστείδης χαίρειν).

As for Diller's conjectures, the lack of correspondence between the content of the astrobotanical treatise and Methodism, if a valid argument against attributing the authorship of the text to Thessalos of Tralles, should also weigh against the plausibility of a later pseudonymous forgery. If the aim was to give authority to a document whose theoretical framework was primarily astrological, why attribute it to a physician not celebrated for such knowledge?³⁰ There is also no mention of any connection with Egypt in Galen's portrait of Thessalos of Tralles, or his description of the letter to Nero, and yet Egyptian knowledge and revealed wisdom are fundamental to the astrobotanical treatise. The doubtfulness of the address to Nero likewise weakens Diller's implicit argument that the forgery was founded on Galen's notice of Thessalos of Tralles' letter to Nero. Galen's portrait, in any case, seems an unlikely inspiration for a pseudonymous forgery, since it is unremittingly hostile to Thessalos of Tralles.³¹ Since the idea of a forgery based on Galen's attack on Thessalos contradicted Cumont's astronomical dating, Diller had to adopt an analytical argument: the material in which astronomical references are found may be dated to the first century CE, but the Thessalos narrative is a later forgery affixed to the treatise in order to revive its authority.³² Diller, however, advanced no other arguments against the unity of the prologue and the text, and there is in fact no positive evidence of disunity. The narrative and the treatise are internally coherent in their references to one another. Thessalos, after all, claims that Nechepso's work contained remedies arranged according to the zodiac and that Asclepius revealed to him knowledge of the times at which to harvest the medicinal plants, and this is precisely the structure of the work, and the critical information given at the head of each section of the treatise.³³ In the Madrid manuscript, the dates are given according to the Alexandrian calendar, the Roman calendar, and a calendar used in Roman Asia Minor that adapted the old Syro-Macedonian month names to the Julian year. These were all time-reckoning systems that fit the locations and frames

³⁰ Indeed, Diller 1936: 181 points out the testimony in Pliny *NH* 29.3 that Thessalos of Tralles was eclipsed at Rome by a doctor (Crinas of Messalia) who prescribed astrological diets to his patients.

³¹ Scott 1991 also considers Galen's portrait fundamental to the creation of "Ps.-Thessalos," but his suggestion that Galen's hostility made Thessalos an even more attractive figure on which to base a forgery is not convincing.

³² Diller 1936: 182. Pingree 1976 did not take account of this contradiction, and suggested that the entire treatise was a third- or fourth-century CE forgery.

³³ By contrast, the manuscripts in which the material has been attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, for example, include a revised *prooemium* which attempts to reshape the material of the Thessalos prologue as a dialogue between Hermes and Asclepius but leaves parts of the text incomprehensible. On this, see Friedrich 1968: 27–28. Compare also the contradiction between the names Harpokration and Thessalos discussed above.

of reference in the autobiographical narrative of the prologue.³⁴ In any case, the argument against unity is motivated only by Diller's interest in separating the astrobotanical treatise from the *oeuvre* of the doctor from Tralles. Since the connection between the two is tenuous at best, the case for a pseudonymous text hardly seems necessary or compelling, and it is better to assume that the Thessalos of the treatise was a separate figure, who bore the same name as the Neronian doctor, and who was at times confused with him.³⁵

Though Cumont's attribution of the treatise to Thessalos of Tralles is not credible, his assignment of a relatively early date to the text on the basis of its astronomical references remains reasonably sound, even if the first-century CE date he gives must be revised somewhat and its precision qualified. Cumont argued that the text of Thessalos *De virtutibus herbarum*

³⁴ On the calendars used in Roman Asia Minor, see McLean 2002: 169–70. In only one other Greek manuscript (Codex Monacensis 542) are the dates preserved, and they have become corrupted. In some cases, the medieval translations preserve the dates, though only in the Roman form. See the discussion below.

³⁵ Kudlien 1978: 222–24 pointed out that the seventh-century CE medical writer John of Alexandria conflated Thessalos of Tralles and the author of the astrobotanical treatise, and this notice is indeed revealing. Although he connected the two figures, he observed a disjuncture between Galen's charge against Thessalos, and what the astrobotanical treatise actually claims: *itaque et Galienus sicut medicus medicum arguit Thesalum in sex mensibus dicentem tradere medicinam. Thesalus vero non hanc dicebat medicinam tradere sex mensibus. sed sciendum quod iens hic ad Egiptum adiutus est curando a virtute superna, et hanc dicebat per sex menses tradere* (John of Alexandria, *Commentaria in Sextum Librum Hippocratis Epidemiarum* 148c58–62; see Pritchett 1975: 404). Though John of Alexandria conflated the two, others clearly kept them separate. A list of medical writers that appears to have originated in the sixth or seventh century CE (Cod. Laur. 73.1 fo. 142v–143v = Tecusan 2004: fr. 13) keeps the writer of the astrobotanical treatise (*Thessalus ex Nechepso*) separate from both the Methodist doctor (who is associated in the list with Themison, the founder of Methodism), and Thessalos, the son of Hippocrates (see Wellmann 1900: 370; Diller 1936: 181).

For the sake of brevity, I shall confine to this footnote a review of a few other opinions on the authorship of the treatise. Smith 1978: 174 n. 12 doubts the attribution to Thessalos of Tralles, but leaves the question open. Sconocchia 1984: 143–44 and 1996: 400–6 has argued for authentic authorship by Thessalos of Tralles, by pointing out that the epilogues as preserved in some versions of the medieval Latin translation have Thessalos writing a book by which he promised to make a man a doctor in a short time, and that in one manuscript (Pal. Lat. 1277) Thessalos travels to Rome. As Kudlien 1978: 223 notes, however, the claim to teach medicine in a short time is not as precise as the six months that Galen cites, but a rather more general boast that any teacher could make who wanted to attract students. See also the counter-arguments above. Fowden 1986: 164–65 considers the text a forgery, but one which contains plausible historical information relating to the first century CE. Scott 1991, for the most part, follows the argument of Diller, though he adduces one new connection between the astrobotanical treatise and Thessalos of Tralles: an account of the role of pores in disease (Thessalos, liber 1, cap. 9.5, Friedrich 1968: 155, 158; cf. Galen *De methodo medendi* 4.4). This doctrine, however, is not unique to Thessalos, and the reference in the astrobotanical treatise only occurs in one Greek MS (F) of the "Hermestext," and one of the Latin translations of this tradition (P). The "Hermestext" tradition includes several apparent interpolations, and the medieval Latin translation of the "Thessalostext" does not include this section (the Madrid MS – the best Greek source – has already broken off by this point). The reference to pores may not be part of the original treatise. See Friedrich 1968: 25–26, 155–58.

Table 1. *Dates of the sun’s ingress in the Madrid manuscript of Thessalos*

Zodiac Sign	Alexandrian Calendar	Asia Minor Calendar	Roman Calendar	Julian Date
Aries ♈	Phamenoth 22	Dystros 18	XV. Kalend. Apr.	March 18
Taurus ♉	Pharmouthi 23	Xanthikos 18	XIV. Kalend. Mai.	April 18
Gemini ♊	Pachons 25	Artemisios 20	XIII. Kalend. Jun.	May 20
Cancer ♋	Pauni 25	Daisios 19	XIII. Kalend. Jul.	June 19

was composed in the first century CE partly using the dates prescribed for harvesting the zodiacal plants given in the Madrid manuscript.³⁶ At the beginning of each of the four surviving chapters on plants and their signs, the treatise gives a date from which point forward the plant is to be harvested. Cumont recognized that these were to be understood as the dates of the sun’s ingress into each of the signs of the zodiac. The dates according to the calendars of Alexandria, Asia Minor, and Rome, as the manuscript reports them, are given in [table 1](#) above, along with the corresponding Julian dates.

Cumont noted that in three of the four cases (Aries, Taurus and Gemini), the date given was one day later than that given for the respective dates of ingress in the Julian calendar of 45 BCE. He attributed this change to the precession of the equinoxes. Since astrologers at this time used sidereal rather than tropical longitudes in marking the motion of the sun, the moon, and the planets through the zodiac, the date at which the sun entered a particular sign was, according to ancient estimates, delayed by about a day every 100 years. Judging by the dates in Thessalos’ treatise, he argued that it was composed in the middle of the first century CE, a date in harmony with his attribution to Thessalos of Tralles.

There are, however, weaknesses in Cumont’s approach to this problem, which can be addressed with the help of evidence published since his article as well as recent studies of ancient astronomical and astrological methods. Cumont’s argument rests on a comparison between the dates in the Madrid manuscript and a calendar of solar ingresses interpolated from information provided by Varro in his discussion of the length of the seasons.³⁷ The principle is sound, but the figures derived from Varro do not

³⁶ Cumont 1918: 96–98; on p. 97 n. 3 he refers to the dates of another Greek MS (F: Codex Monacensis 542), but does not use them since the figures were clearly corrupt.

³⁷ Cumont cites Ginzler 1906–14: 2.281, a table of dates interpolated from Varro’s account of the length of the seasons and their first days (*Rust.* 1.28).

provide the best evidence of ancient astronomical calculations. Cumont's conclusions can now be reexamined using the more copious astronomical data from literary horoscopes and papyri assembled and analyzed by Otto Neugebauer and Henry B. Van Hoesen, as well as the astronomical papyri from Oxyrhynchus published by Alexander Jones.³⁸ By comparing data derived from these sources with modern calculations of solar longitudes, it is possible to create a more accurate picture of how precession together with ancient methods of calculating sidereal longitudes created changes over time in the dates of solar ingress. In turn, this allows an estimate of the date of the Thessalos text that is both more cautious and more secure. Any attempt to offer a precise date for the composition is impeded by the small sample of dates in Thessalos and the wide range of deviation typically found in ancient calculations – deviations not solely attributable to the difference between tropical and sidereal longitudes, but to inaccurate tables, computational error, and so forth. Bearing these constraints in mind, it is nevertheless possible to exchange Cumont's mid-first century date for a range of dates from ca. 75 CE to 200 CE, with the most likely period being ca. 100–150 CE.³⁹ These dates are later than what Cumont proposed, but certainly not in the fourth to sixth centuries CE as others have suggested.⁴⁰ More importantly, the timeframe provides a broad historical milieu for Thessalos' autobiographical narrative and the treatise it frames: the second century of Roman rule over a "Hellenistic" Egypt.

INTERPRETING THESSALOS, LOCATING MAGIC

Cumont's early work was fundamental not only for his identification of the connections between the Greek and Latin manuscripts, his attribution of authorship, and his dating of the text, but also for situating Thessalos in the history of Hellenistic religions. Thessalos represented a significant intermediate position between Egypt and Rome, and his treatise became

³⁸ Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959; Jones 1999.

³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the calculations, see Appendix III.

⁴⁰ It is also worth pointing out that the recent identification of a reference to the Late Antique Latin translation of the Thessalos text in the "Physica Plinii" by Ferraces Rodríguez 2007 has rendered the dates cited by Nutton 2002 (i.e. fourth to sixth century CE) quite unlikely. Since the *Physica Plinii* are usually dated to the fifth century CE, the Thessalos translation is certainly no later than that date, and probably fourth century or earlier. This *terminus ante quem* for the Greek Thessalos text itself must be pushed somewhat earlier, since the Late Antique Latin translation was probably borrowed through an intermediary, and is itself, of course, a translation. The Late Antique Latin translation of the Thessalos text was also a source for the medical treatise *De herbis feminis* (ca. fifth century CE), on which see Ferraces Rodríguez 2005. I would like to thank Arsenio Ferraces Rodríguez for drawing my attention to this and for sharing his unpublished work with me.

a critical link between the later corpus of works attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and the ancient land of Egypt, which Cumont identified as the source of much of the magic and superstition that “infected” the Roman world. Later hermetism and theurgy, he asserted, were nothing more than “the result of the invasion, into Greek philosophy, of magic, which in all periods was practiced in the Orient and especially in Egypt.”⁴¹ The magical and astrological quality of Thessalos’ treatise was evidence of the superstition that permeated ancient science of the day, in this case an essentially Egyptian superstition drawn from native literature during the Ptolemaic period and forming part of a much wider pattern of Egyptian and Oriental influences transmitted through the medium of Hellenism to the Roman world.⁴² Cumont located the origins of magic and other superstitious beliefs such as astrology outside Graeco-Roman civilization, identifying them as foreign to its rationality and the result of intercourse with Eastern lands in the Hellenistic period. Thessalos was, for Cumont, a representative vector in this process.

For other early scholars of Hellenistic religions, Thessalos and his treatise not only offered evidence for the phenomenon of invasive foreign superstitions, but also a means of explaining how these irrational ideas could take hold in Graeco-Roman civilization. In Thessalos’ story, A. D. Nock and A. J. Festugière saw a document of religious searching, an expression of the spiritual needs of the time comparable to other roughly contemporary autobiographical or pseudo-autobiographical texts, such as the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*. They situated Thessalos in a landscape of Hellenistic religious sentiment that, according to Droysen’s account of the religious crisis in *Hellenismus*, would bring about the end of paganism and the rise of Christianity.⁴³ For this to happen, the development of the individual and of humanity in general had to supplant particularistic national and ethnical development. With the rationalistic critique of ancient myths and rites, as Droysen argued in a vivid passage, the Greek intellect was separated from the religious ties that bound it to national

⁴¹ Cumont 1918: 91 – “la théurgie néo-platonicienne n’est que le résultat de l’invasion, dans la philosophie grecque, de la magie, qui, à toutes les époques, fut pratiquée en Orient et spécialement en Égypte. Les thaumaturges de ce pays s’attribuèrent toujours le pouvoir de provoquer des apparitions divines, et toujours aussi ils trouvèrent des dupes pour les croire.” For the metaphor of infection, see p. 107: “Galen lui-même n’échappa pas à la contagion de leurs théories.”

⁴² “[Ce document] aide à fixer l’origine de ces oeuvres à demi médicales, à demi religieuses qui, traduit sous les Ptolémées des papyrus égyptiens ou composées par des faussaires grecs, furent mises tantôt sous le nom de Néchepso et Pétosiris, tantôt sous celui d’Hermès Trismégiste.” Cumont 1918: 102; see also 106–8.

⁴³ Nock 1933a: 99–121 (esp. 107–10). Festugière 1939 and Festugière 1950: 56–59, 229–30.

traditions, and Greek religious sentiment soon abandoned itself to exotic, irrational foreign beliefs:

And sentiment? To the extent that the indigenous ceased to be certain, unsatisfied sentiment turned with growing ardor toward the foreign, the dark, the uncomprehended; orgiastic rites multiplied; the mysteries of Isis and Mithras gained access; astrology, magic and Sibylline revelation gained ground. The bleakest time in the religious life of humanity began; religion was seen dissolving into its components. For some there was a comfortable morality of enjoyment and avoiding injustice instead of religion; others, in the pride of their Gnosis, did not feel its absence; others drowned out the cries of their hearts with depraved orgies, with fasts and mortifications. The peaceful, warming flame of the inner hearth had gone out, and humanity sought in vain after a new light to brighten the desolate darkness within and without.⁴⁴

For Nock and Festugière, Thessalos' quest for magical knowledge was a product both of the defective religion described by Droysen and of defective science in a declining Graeco-Roman civilization. The spirit of the age, in this view, was satisfied neither with answers produced through the exercise of reason, nor with those of traditional religion, and Thessalos' story was understood as an example of rising "religious inquisitiveness" and "a general increase in the tendency to believe."⁴⁵ Certainty and truth, whether scientific or religious, were more and more to be obtained from the gods through direct revelation. For Festugière especially, Thessalos' story demonstrated that true knowledge at this time was a matter of intimacy with the divine and mystical union with god.⁴⁶ The turn to the revealed wisdom of the Orient was not so much a cause as a symptom of the decline of reason in a waning Hellenism,⁴⁷ and Thessalos' text was important

⁴⁴ Droysen 1877–78: 3.23–24: "Und das Gefühl? in dem Maaße, als man des Heimischen gewiß zu sein aufhört, wendet sich das unbefriedigte Gefühl mit steigendem Eifer zu dem Fremden, Dunklen, Unverstandenen; es mehren sich die orgiastischen Dienste, die Mysterien der Isis, des Mithras gewinnen Eingang, Astrologie, Zauberei, Sibyllenwesen greift um sich. Es beginnt die trübste Zeit in dem religiösen Leben der Menschheit, man sieht es sich in seine Elemente auflösen. Den Einen ist eine bequeme Sittenlehre, Genießen und Unrecht meiden, anstatt der Religion; Andere fühlen in dem Stolz ihrer Gnosis nicht, daß sie sie entbehren; Andere übertäuben durch wüste Orgien, durch Fasten und Kasteiungen den lauten Ruf ihres Herzens. Die stille wärmende Heerdflamme in Inneren ist erloschen, und man sucht vergebens nach einem neuen Licht, das öde Dunkel drinnen und draußen zu erhellen."

⁴⁵ Nock 1933a: 99–110. On this persistent scholarly view of the period, and the frequent use of Thessalos' narrative to evoke it, see also Frankfurter 1998: 11–12.

⁴⁶ Festugière 1939: 45–46 considers the Thessalos' preface a narrative of religious experience, features of which are "la croyance que la vérité ne peut être obtenue que par révélation et, dès lors, le recours amoureux à une divinité avec laquelle on veut s'unir d'une union intime et personnelle."

⁴⁷ See esp. Festugière 1950: 1–18 entitled "Le déclin du rationalisme," and especially 6–7: "Serait-ce donc l'Oronte déversé dans le Tibre", cette invasion de Juifs, de Syriens, d'Égyptiens, qui apportaient avec eux l'esprit irrationnel, mystique, de l'Orient? Au vrai, cette influence, qui fut grande paraît

not so much for its relationship to Egyptian traditions of knowledge, but as a document of personal experience that gave insight into the religious psychology of the age. Thessalos, spurred on by an impulse that was (in this view) historically important, probably sincere, but ultimately misdirected, was at best an earnest “seeker of the truth,” and at worst the dupe of a crafty Egyptian priest.⁴⁸

In emphasizing the breakdown of tradition and the “spiritualization” of religion in the Hellenistic period, this approach to the Thessalos narrative, as J. Z. Smith has argued, obscures the novel ways in which the author of this text made connections with traditional religious forms, and transformed received paradigms of religious knowledge. Smith’s interpretation of the prologue in his essay on “The Temple and the Magician” finds as much significance in the failure of King Nechepso’s treatise as in the success of Thessalos’ final magical revelation. Smith used the Thessalos narrative to explore a shift – typical of the Hellenistic world – from “locative” to “utopian” modes of religious practice. In the wake of Alexander’s conquests, he has argued, the almost total cessation of native kingship in the Near East and Egypt led to radical reinterpretations of traditional religions.⁴⁹ The locative religious formations characterized by strong ties to a particular homeland, temple, or cult house, in which the god dwelt or manifested himself, and by ideologies of sacred kingship were rivaled by diasporic and utopian formations, in which access to the divine could be found anywhere, transcendence became central, and the primary operative was the mobile religious entrepreneur, the holy man, or the magician. The importance of Thessalos’ story for Smith is that it involves a number of reversals of

plutôt un symptôme que la cause profonde du mal. Si haut qu’on remonte dans l’histoire de la pensée grecque, on la voit en contact avec l’Orient: mais c’est elle qui profite de ce contact. Elle emprunte, mais organise et met en oeuvre ce qu’elle emprunte, et par conséquent domine, loin de se laisser assimiler . . . D’où vient alors que, maintenant, ce rationalisme grec se renonce, que ce soit lui qui cède devant l’élément étranger, et qu’au lieu de s’en nourrir il finisse par s’y absorber? On est bien forcé de constater une diminution de vie dans l’hellénisme lui-même . . . ”

⁴⁸ See Cumont’s evaluation, cited above n. 41. Festugière 1939: 54 carefully distinguishes Thessalos’ impulse as “une religiosité sensible, avide d’émotion, d’apparitions et de prodiges, aussi éloignée de la *θεωρία* platonicienne que du pneumatisme paulinien, mais somme tout, vivante, et dont la sincérité, du moins, paraît indéniable.” Later, however, he explains the Egyptian priest’s revelation of the god as a sham perpetrated on Thessalos through magical tricks (75–77).

⁴⁹ A convenient summary of this theory is found in Smith 1978: xi–xv, and the themes of his argument are treated in more detail in chapters 4–9 of the same work, and pp. 293, 308–9. Smith in a recent essay briefly reviews aspects of this formulation in a lively and accessible way (Smith 2003). It is very important to note that Smith’s scheme of a shift from *locative* to *utopian* modes is in no way intended to be construed as an evolution from one pattern of religious mentality to another. As Smith himself writes, “They are not to be identified with any particular culture at any particular time. They remain coeval possibilities which may be appropriated whenever and wherever they correspond to man’s experience of the world” (1978: 309).

standard tropes in the revelatory biographies of wise men, reversals which map onto the wider pattern of the Hellenistic and Late Antique shift just described. Thessalos gained his revealed knowledge not from a sacred book in the context of an archaic temple and with the authorization of sacred kingship, but ultimately procured it through magical practice in a purified house, a place of more temporary, mobile, and domestic sanctity, thus radically revalorizing the archaic wisdom tradition of the failed Nechepso treatise.

Though Smith understood Thessalos as the “magician” of his Temple–Magician antinomy,⁵⁰ subsequent scholarship (often inspired by or reacting to his work) has focused primarily on the figure of the Egyptian priest whom Thessalos consulted in Thebes in order to explore the social and cultural location of the magician, the nature of his authority, and the characterization of magic in the Hellenistic and late antique world. Garth Fowden, like Cumont and Festugière, briefly explored the Thessalos narrative in relation to the corpus of texts ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus. In examining the origins and development of hermetic literature (both theoretical and practical), he saw Thessalos’ occult researches among the Theban priests as the imaginative coloring of a pseudonymous text, but a coloring which was nevertheless plausible and suggestive of a Roman-period historical reality: the Graeco-Egyptian priestly milieu of hermetism.⁵¹ Robert Ritner, on the other hand, has more directly confronted the terms of Smith’s thesis, arguing that since it was the priest and not Thessalos who performed the rite that produced the revelation of Asclepius, the classification of the entire *praxis* as “magic” is problematic given both the traditional status of the priest and the more positive and legitimate connotations of the equivalent term for “magic” (*ḥk3*) in Egyptian religion.⁵² Though posing different

⁵⁰ As in the penultimate paragraph, Smith 1978: 189, “The ancient books of wisdom, the authority – indeed the divinity – of the priest-king, the faith of the clergy in the efficacy of their rituals, the temple as the chief locus of revelation – all of these have been relativized in favor of a *direct experience of a mobile magician* with his equally mobile divinity. *This experience allows Thessalos* to revalorize the archaic wisdom of plants, stones, stars” (emphasis mine).

⁵¹ Fowden 1986: 162–65, 166.

⁵² As Ritner 1993: 14–28 shows, the Coptic word *ⲉⲕ*, the lexical descendant of *ḥk3*, was used to translate the Greek *μαγεία*. The status of *Ḥk3* as a god, however, and the prominence of both the principle and the personification in Egyptian theology makes it impossible to identify this Egyptian concept of “magic” as a negative counterpart to religion. On these issues in relation to Thessalos, see Ritner 1993: 218–20; 1995: 3356–58. It is worth pointing out that in the magical papyri, the religious traditions of the temple, and the sacred texts kept there, could still be sources of authority (see e.g. *PGM CXXII* (first century BCE or CE), published by Brashear 1979). My earlier article (Moyer 2003b) begins from an attempt to mediate at the historical level between the positions of Smith and Ritner. In general, scholarship on ancient magic in the 1980s and 1990s saw a vigorous debate over definitions of the term at the emic and etic levels which in most quarters has led to greater

historical questions and taking different approaches, both authors have valued the story of Thessalos' quest and especially his interview with the Theban priest, because it reveals historical connections between Egyptian traditions of scribal and ritual practice and the so-called "magical" and "occult" practices of such texts as the *Hermetica* or the Greek and Demotic magical papyri. A growing body of scholarship is now confirming the Egyptian priestly milieu of this literature, and the adaptations of Egyptian priestly discourses and religious ideas that it employs.⁵³

At the same time, scholars have also explored the imaginative construction of the Egyptian priest as a powerful wise man or magician, especially through the exoticizing lens of Greek and Roman Egyptomania, and how this imagined figure transformed the value and status of the Egyptian priest and his traditions in the Hellenistic and Roman world. Thessalos' story of a quest for magical knowledge, in which he eventually succeeded by consulting an Egyptian priest, clearly assumes that Egyptian priests have special powers and authority in such matters. This text, therefore, is among the earliest surviving Greek or Latin depictions of the Egyptian priest as an authoritative source of magical knowledge, an image that would become familiar through the works of Lucian, Apuleius, Heliodorus, and many others.⁵⁴ The assimilation of the Egyptian priest to the exotic portrait of the mage, however, clearly trapped him in a circumscribed, ambivalent discourse, which, while granting the priest authority, also dominated and marginalized his indigenous Egyptian traditions by subsuming them under negative Greek and Roman concepts of magic as foolish, deceitful, or dangerously transgressive.⁵⁵

sensitivity both to problems in the use of the category in scholarly analysis, and to the particularities of the category within different ancient cultures, especially in its use as a marginalizing discourse. On these debates, see e.g., Segal 1981; Faraone and Obbink 1991; Versnel 1991; Smith 1995; Graf 1997: 8–19; Faraone 1999: 16–18.

⁵³ See e.g. Fowden 1986; Ritner 1995; Gordon 1997; Frankfurter 1998: esp. pp. 198–237. On the Greek and Demotic magical papyri, see now Dieleman 2005. For judicious evaluations of the relationship between the Demotic *Book of Thoth* and the Greek *Hermetica*, see Jasnow and Zauzich 2005: 65–71 and Quack 2007: 261.

⁵⁴ Lucian *Philops.* 34–36 gives a satirical portrait of the Egyptian priest Pankrates (perhaps a satire on the historical Pachrates; see Dickie 2001: 212–13 for references); see also the figure of Zarchlas in *Apul. Met.* 2.28–30; Calasiris in Heliod. *Aeth.*; and Clement's more general desires in *Ps.-Clement Recognitions* 1.5. Note also the magician Dekaineos, who was supposed to have studied in Egypt (Strabo 7.3.11); in Achilles Tatius *Leucippe & Clitophon* 2.7 an "Egyptian woman" taught Leucippe charms against wasp and bee stings; *Ps.-Cyprian* claims to have spent ten years studying magic with the priests of Memphis (*Ps.-Cyprian, Conf.* 3); Jerome, *Vita Hilarionis* 12.2 tells a story of a young man who learned magic from a priest of Imhotep in Memphis.

⁵⁵ On geographical and ethnic boundaries in ancient histories and explanations of magic, see Gordon 1987 and 1999: 229–31; and note especially Gordon's notion of a transgressive "strong view of magic"

David Frankfurter has suggested, furthermore, that such representations were not simply part of literary fantasy, but came to affect Egyptian priestly practice, and especially the changing modes of priestly authority in the social and economic conditions of Roman Egypt. Through “stereotype appropriation,” Frankfurter has argued, some priests came to adopt and act out the role of the wise mage as a means of gaining social and political advantage or cultural prestige in the wider Mediterranean world of the Roman empire. This was not, of course, a straightforward capitulation to stereotypes nor, indeed, entirely alien to the Egyptian priest’s own self-image. Egyptian literature, from at least as early as the Middle Kingdom, included numerous stories of priests at court performing marvelous feats through magical rites and spells and these stories created a heroic type or ideal, a “horizon of aspiration” for later Egyptian priests.⁵⁶ Under Roman rule, however, the appeal to this type was conditioned in part by the economic restrictions on the priesthood created by the administrative reorganization of the temples and of the prerogatives of priestly status.⁵⁷ Under these economic pressures, as Frankfurter suggests, some priests perhaps sought to trade on the Graeco-Roman stereotype:

We might then suppose that Egyptian priests during the Roman period, as a potential response to the financial constraints of the temples, were seizing upon a role clearly based on the heroes of Egyptian literature, but then developed as a Mediterranean cultural type through Roman culture’s exoticism: the Egyptian *magos* and his superior powers.⁵⁸

Frankfurter understands Thessalos’ meeting with the priest as part of this phenomenon, an economy of both representations and financial realities which disembedded Egyptian priests from their more local or indigenous roles, transforming them into “Oriental gurus.”⁵⁹ The importance of

created in the Hellenistic period, which “confounded indigenous marginal practice with the learned or ritual ‘magic’ of Babylonia, Egypt and the Jews” (Gordon 1999: 260). On the exoticized image of the Egyptian priest, see Frankfurter 1998: 217–21.

⁵⁶ For stories of the Egyptian priest as a “horizon of aspiration” for magicians in the Graeco-Roman Period, see Gordon 1997. On the continuity of this traditional heroic image of the Egyptian priest into the Roman period, see also Frankfurter 1998: 226–33, Dieleman 2005: 222–38, and the discussion below.

⁵⁷ Especially under the *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*. For brief overviews of the change in circumstances for Egyptian priests in the transition from the Ptolemaic to the Roman periods, see Ritner 1998: 4–10, and Frankfurter 1998: 198–203. I shall return to this question below.

⁵⁸ Frankfurter 1998: 228.

⁵⁹ See Frankfurter 1998: 198–237, esp. 220: “*Mageia* and *magoi* seem to have fascinated Graeco-Roman authors as a kind of mysterious Oriental ‘service’ at the same time as the Roman empire as a whole was growing ever more frightened of the subversive power of alien religious practices. Thus as Clement feigns interest in the priests’ necromancy, Thessalos of Tralles desires the old men of Thebes

Thessalos' narrative of his encounter lies in its testimony to this intercultural commerce and its implications for the Egyptian priesthood.⁶⁰

This sophisticated reading of the priest's role in Thessalos' autobiography does not, however, entirely address the nature of Thessalos' claims to authority (as opposed to the priest's), and the way in which he both rivals and completes the "Egyptian wisdom" of king Nechepso's treatise. Thessalos' consultation of the Egyptian priest as a magical authority is only one dimension of this process, and I would argue that Thessalos makes even more fundamental claims to insider knowledge. If the priest whom Thessalos encountered in Thebes was appropriating the pan-Mediterranean role or stereotype of the exotic and powerful magician, Thessalos, I would argue, was for his part appropriating the role of an Egyptian priest and all the prerogatives of authentic wisdom that pertain to that status.

In this regard, the importance and interest of Thessalos' historical position between Egypt and Rome, first signalled by Cumont, can be imagined through comparison with other, more recent figures who have claimed a special status as insiders in transmitting the knowledge of an alien culture to Western audiences. I am thinking, for example, of the ethnographer Marcel Griaule who employed implicit discourses of initiation, and claims to elect status (well beyond that of ethnographer) in representing the Dogon religious ideas he "discovered" through his conversations with the maker of amulets, the wise man Ogotemméli.⁶¹ Or perhaps Thessalos and his

to divulge to him 'the efficacious force of magic'. See also 181: "One can then suppose, in the light of the story of Thessalos of Tralles, that some priests came to offer the same divination 'experiences' to private clients at a price." Dickie 2001: 216–17 makes less sophisticated use of Thessalos as evidence for this cross-cultural trade in magic; see also his more general comments (98–99, 109–12). For a sophisticated comparison of the strategy of "stereotype appropriation" with similar discourses of prestige and authority that were oriented internally, toward the Egyptian priestly milieu itself, see Dieleman 2005: 185–284.

⁶⁰ See also my earlier essay, Moyer 2003b.

⁶¹ Griaule 1965. Note Germaine Dieterlen's description of the process of revelation (Griaule 1965: xvi): "The elders of the lineages of the double village of Ogol and the most important totemic priests of the region of Sanga met together and decided that the more esoteric aspects of their religion should be fully revealed to Professor Griaule. To begin this they chose one of their own best informed members, Ogotemméli. . . . This first exposition lasted exactly the number of days recorded in *Dieu d'Eau*. . . . Although we knew nothing of it at the time, the progress of this instruction by Ogotemméli was being reported on daily to the council of elders and priests." In Griaule's description of the conditions for the thirty-three days with Ogotemméli, there is a manifest concern for the secrecy of the teachings (13), which were traditionally acquired through initiation, handed down from father to son (2–3, 13–14). The status of Ogotemméli within Dogon society was very important, but Griaule also accorded him the status of "Master" (209) in a relationship that is clearly understood to be that of master and disciple. The death of Ogotemméli noted at the end of the book extends the value of the work beyond ethnography and makes Griaule a successor to Ogotemméli's lineage, a preserver and transmitter of Dogon wisdom. On Griaule's assumption of insider status through an initiation, and its implications for ethnography, see Clifford 1988: 55–91, esp. 80–91.

Theban priest can be compared to the example of Carlos Castaneda and his adventures with the sorcerer Don Juan, in the course of which Castaneda claims he became initiated (in part through peyote and mushrooms) into “a Yaqui way of knowledge,” an experiential and esoteric knowledge that he conveyed to North American and European readers of the late 1960s, who were enthusiastic for psychedelic drugs and authentic, native philosophies.⁶² A different and more extreme example, but one that can illuminate the potential implications of a claim to authority made on the basis of an assumed identity, is that of Tuesday Lobsang Rampa. *The Third Eye*, an extraordinarily popular autobiographical work, was penned under this name and purported to supply, from the perspective of an actual Tibetan lama, an authentic account of his education in Tibetan monasteries and his initiation into the mysterious religion of “Lamaism.” After his first book, however, the author behind the author was discovered to be Cyril Hoskin, a maker of surgical fittings from Devonshire. But Hoskin claimed that through a transfer of consciousness he had actually become the lama Tuesday Lobsang Rampa. He enjoyed continued popular authority on the basis of this identity, and wrote nineteen other books.⁶³ These cases all differ in their particular historical situations from one another and from the Thessalos narrative, but in each, the authority of the text in representing the “wisdom” of another culture lies in the implied or explicit identification of its author with a figure within the alien culture – that is, in the appropriation and representation not only of exotic foreign knowledge, but also of the discourses of identity which authorize that knowledge.

To understand better the nature of Thessalos’ relationship to Egyptian wisdom and his interaction with the Egyptian priest, I shall reexamine his

⁶² Castaneda 1968. If in retrospect and/or from an academic vantage point, the authoritative power of the Don Juan books seems limited, remember that in 1973, Carlos Castaneda was awarded a Ph.D. in anthropology by the University of California at Los Angeles for one of those books. His dissertation, “Sorcery: A Description of the World,” was virtually identical to his third book, *Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan*. In the abstract of the dissertation, Castaneda’s claim to insider status was appropriately theorized for an academic context; he repeatedly described his dissertation as “an emic account” (De Mille 1976: 64–84). See also De Mille 1980, Needham 1985: 188–218 and Fikes 1993.

⁶³ The remarkable story of Cyril Hoskin/Tuesday Lobsang Rampa is explored by Lopez 1998: 86–113 in a study which casts a fine critical eye (informed by the work of P. Bourdieu) on the relationship of Hoskin’s authoritative but disputed status to the ways in which the modern scholar of Tibetology is authorized to represent Tibet, its religion, and its culture. Another remarkable example of an appropriated or assumed identity serving to authorize reports of an alien culture is the fictitious ethnography of Formosa, written in 1704 by George Psalmanaazaar, who claimed to be a native Formosan, though he was from southern France. On this imposture and its implications for ethnography, see Needham 1985: 75–116.

treatise along the lines suggested by these parallels. Thessalos, I shall argue, not only claimed to have obtained his knowledge through the assistance of an Egyptian priest; he also insinuated himself into Egyptian traditions of priestly knowledge and into the role of the priest himself.

THE KING AND I: THESSALOS AND THE NECHEPSO TRADITION

Thessalos wrote that while he was concluding his studies in Alexandria and getting ready to return home, he came across a book by Nechepso, containing twenty-four remedies based on stones and plants organized according to the signs of the zodiac. The book promised that these remedies were efficacious for the entire body and every disease, but when Thessalos attempted to prepare and use Nechepso's "solar lozenge" (τροχίσχον ἡλιακόν) and all the king's other remedies, he met with utter failure.⁶⁴ In Thebes, at the end of his long quest for knowledge, the reason for his failure was revealed to him by Asclepius:

ὁ θεὸς εἶπεν· ὁ βασιλεὺς Νεχεψώ, ἀνὴρ φρενερέστατος καὶ πάσαις κεκοσμημένος ἀρεταῖς παρὰ μὲν θείας φωνῆς οὐδὲν ὦν σὺ μαθεῖν ἐπιζητεῖς εὐτύχησε· φύσει δὲ χρησάμενος ἀγαθῇ συμπαθείας λίθων καὶ βοτανῶν ἐπενόησε, τοὺς δὲ καιροὺς καὶ τοὺς τόπους ἐν οἷς τὰς βοτάνας λαμβάνειν οὐκ ἔγνω.⁶⁵

the god said, "King Nechepso, a man of most sound mind and adorned with every virtue, did not obtain from a divine voice anything which you seek to learn; having made use of a noble nature, he observed the sympathies of stones and plants, but the times and places in which it is necessary to pick the plants, he did not know."

This declaration of Nechepso's limitations contradicts the considerable authority that the Egyptian king (often closely linked with the figure of Petosiris) had in astrological writers of the high Roman empire and late antiquity, such as Vettius Valens, Firmicus Maternus, and Hephaestion of Thebes,⁶⁶ and flatly denies the professed divine origins of Nechepso's knowledge. When Asclepius says that the king did not obtain his knowledge from a "divine voice," he seems specifically to dispute the divine vision that Nechepso claims to have had in a brief metrical fragment preserved in Vettius Valens:⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Thessalos I prooem.6–7. ⁶⁵ Thessalos I prooem.27.

⁶⁶ See the fragments collected in Riess 1892, together with the revised and expanded collection of the fragments assembled by Heilen (forthcoming). I would like to thank Stephan Heilen for sharing his unpublished work with me.

⁶⁷ This contradiction was observed by Festugière 1950: 314 and Smith 1978: 184–85.

ἔδοξε δὴ μοι πάννυχον πρὸς ἄερα
 <.....>
 καὶ μοί τις ἐξήχησεν οὐρανοῦ βοή,
 τῇ σάρκα [μὲν] ἀμφέκειτο πέπλος κυάνεος,
 κνέφας προτείνων...⁶⁸

I decided, then, (to gaze in prayer) all night long (up) to the sky

 and a shout sounded forth from heaven.
 Around its flesh a mantle of dark blue color was wrapped,
 stretching out darkness before itself...

On the other hand, Nechepso's treatise was not entirely wrong. He did, after all, discern with his "noble nature" (φύσει... ἀγαθῇ) the correct sympathies of plants, stones, and signs of the zodiac. All that was missing was the technical detail of the times at which to harvest the plants – in essence no more than the correct dates of the sun's ingress into the various signs. The position that Thessalos took regarding Nechepso is rather ambivalent. He may have charged him with royal folly,⁶⁹ but through the voice of divine revelation the king was granted innate virtues. And as much as Thessalos was ready to supplant the king by getting a direct revelation from a god – the same god from whom Nechepso received his wisdom⁷⁰ – Thessalos ultimately only supplemented the king's treatise. Indeed, the rhetoric of Thessalos' address to the emperor is not so much of rejection or reversal, but of a unique transmission and completion of the wisdom of Nechepso.⁷¹

Πολλῶν ἐπιχειρησάντων ἐν τῷ βίῳ, Σεβαστὲ καῖσαρ, παροδοῦναι πολλὰ παράδοξα, μηδενὸς πρὸς τέλος ἀγαγεῖν τὰς ἐπαγγελίας δυνηθέντος... , μόνος δοκῶ τῶν ἀπ' αἰῶνος ἀνθρώπων πεποιηκέναι τι παρὰδοξον (καὶ ὀλίγοις

⁶⁸ Riess 1892: fr. 1 (= Vettius Valens 6.1.9). The text quoted follows that of Pingree (1986) with the discussion and translation of Heilen forthcoming. The latter provides an extensive and insightful commentary. In introducing this quotation, Vettius Valens makes it clear that this refers to a heavenly ascent and vision (θεωρία): εἰς τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἐπιθυμίας καὶ ἀρετῆς ἔσπευσαν ὥς τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς καταλιπόντας οὐρανοβατεῖν, ἀθανάτοις ψυχαῖς καὶ θεαῖς καὶ ἱεραῖς γνώμαις συνεπιστήσοντας, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Νεχεψὼ ἔμαρτύρησε λέγων... ("They [sc. the ancient kings] strove with such a degree of desire and virtue as to leave behind the things upon the earth and tread the heavens, observing divine and sacred maxims along with the immortal souls, just as Nechepso testifies when he says...") Heilen has made the convincing suggestion that the god who granted this revelation is the Egyptian creation god Kneph/Kmeph, who was equated with the Greek Agathos Daimon.

⁶⁹ Thessalos I proem.6.

⁷⁰ See *P.Louvre* 2342 bis, republished with translation and commentary by Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 42–44; Firmicus Maternus 3.1.1, 4.3.5.

⁷¹ Thessalos I proem.1–2. See also Gordon 1997: 76–77 for a similar evaluation of Thessalos' relationship to Nechepso.

γνωστόν). ἐπιχειρήσας γὰρ πράγμασιν, ἅπερ θνητῆς μέτρα φύσεως ὑπερβαίνει, τούτοις γε μετὰ πολλῶν βασάνων καὶ κινδύνων τὸ καθήκον τέλος ἐπέθηκα.

Since many in their lives have tried, August Caesar, to transmit many marvels, but none have been able to bring their promises to completion . . . I think that I alone among the men of all time have accomplished something marvelous <and known to few>. For having set my hand to matters which transcend the limits of mortal nature, I have, through many trials and dangers, brought to these matters the proper completion.

The ambivalent way in which Thessalos situated himself in relation to an Egyptian tradition of astrological knowledge, and the consequent implications for Thessalos' identity and authority, can be clarified by reading his treatise in the context of the Nechepso–Petosiris tradition, the nature of its astrological learning, and the conventions used to present it.

Thessalos was hitching his wagon to a well-known tradition – indeed, it was one of the most revered and authoritative traditions of ancient astrology. The fragments and testimonia of Nechepso show that one or more works attributed to the Egyptian king did contain something like the material on iatromathematical uses of stones and plants that Thessalos says he found in the library at Alexandria. Firmicus Maternus refers to Nechepso as an authority on the sympathetic relationships between parts of the zodiac, especially the decans, and various states of good and ill health.⁷² This type of knowledge, along with predictions given by the decans, was also part of the Egyptian book of the *Salmeschiniaka*, with which Nechepso was connected.⁷³ Galen, moreover, reports that Nechepso “in his fourteenth book” prescribed an amulet consisting of green jasper with the figure of a radiate serpent for problems of the esophagus and stomach.⁷⁴ The figure is most likely Khnoumis or Khnoubis, a divinity

⁷² Riess fr. 27 (= Firmicus Maternus 8.4.13–14; II 293, 11–24, Kroll-Skutsch-Ziegler). Riess fr. 28 (= Firmicus Maternus 4.22.2; I 264, 26 – 265, 8, Kroll-Skutsch-Ziegler).

⁷³ Hephaestion of Thebes 2.18.72–75. This Egyptian tradition is also discussed in Porphyry *Letter to Anebo* 2.12–13, and Iamblichus *On the Mysteries* 8.4. *P.Oxy.* 3.465, though dated to the second century CE, contains a text that resembles the *Salmeschiniaka*, which (judging by the geographical and political orientation of the predictions it contains) was probably composed in the Ptolemaic period. Earlier origins have been proposed by Leitz, who has suggested that the *naos* from Saft el-Henna and its decan texts are an early example of the *Salmeschiniaka* (Leitz 1995: esp. 49–50). Thissen (in Leitz 1995: 51–55) has interpreted the name as derived from an (as yet unknown) Egyptian book entitled *srn-nj-shny(.w)* “the movement of the influences (constellations).” On the relationship between the *Hermetica* and the *Salmeschiniaka*, see Fowden 1986: 139–40.

⁷⁴ Riess fr. 29 (= Galen, περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀπλῶν φαρμάκων κράσεως (*De simpl.*) 10.2.19: (XII 207, 5–8, Kühn). See also Aëtius of Amida 2.18 (I 162, 21–23 Olivieri s.v. ἱασιπιδίς λίθος).

connected with the Egyptian decan-god *Kn̄m*.⁷⁵ Other fragments preserve a remedy for fever that consists of making a lozenge or pastille out of the flowers of the chamomile (χαμαίμηλον), which are “consecrated to the sun” in one version.⁷⁶ Perhaps this was even the “solar lozenge” of Thessalos’ failed experiments in Alexandria.

Nechepso, in company with Petosiris, was also considered an authority on a much wider range of astrological wisdom, including elements of general astrological theory, personal astrology, and judicial astrology (predictions relating to entire lands or rulers embodying their lands).⁷⁷ The fragments attributed to these figures include discussions of the Egyptian system of decans, the seven planetary orbits, the magnitude of the lunar orbit, and the doctrine of terms (ὅρια – divisions of the signs assigned to planets).⁷⁸ In genethliological astrology, Nechepso and Petosiris are credited with knowledge concerning the relationship between the moon’s positions at conception and birth, the “Part of Fortune,” methods of calculating the lifespan, the climacteries (critical points of life), and the power of the predominant planet (οἰκοδεσπότης), as well as predictive techniques such as the “operative month” (μὴν χρηματιστικός) and the whole doctrine of καταρχαί (forecasts for an undertaking or voyage).⁷⁹ The most extensive fragments attributed to Nechepso are judicial interpretations of various celestial events and their accompanying phenomena, including eclipses, comets, and the rising of Sothis.⁸⁰ In short, the Nechepso tradition, as preserved in the fragmentary remains quoted by later authors, touches on

⁷⁵ This figure is discussed at length by Bonner 1950: 54–55, and Delatte and Derchain 1964: 54–68. Kákosy 1982: 170, 175, figs. 5 and 10 gives examples of Egyptian amulets that included *Kn̄m*; note also the statuette with figures of decans, including *Kn̄m*, pp. 166–67, fig. 3d.

⁷⁶ Riess frs. 30 = Aëtius of Amida 1.38 (I 40, 13–24 Olivieri s.v. Ἀνθεμὶς ἡ χαμαίμηλον). Riess 1892: 380 points out that Galen (I. I, I. III. c. 10) mentions this plant as “consecrated to the sun among the wisest of the Egyptians and considered a remedy for all fevers” (τῶν Αἰγυπτίων τοῖς σοφωτάτοις ἡλίῳ τε καθιέρωται καὶ πυρετῶν ἀπάντων ἱαμα νενόμισται). Other texts which appear to refer to medical wisdom include Riess frs. 31 and 32. For an extensive discussion of Riess fr. 31, see now Heilen forthcoming: 41–55.

⁷⁷ For brief overviews of the content of the fragments, see Kroll 1935: 2161–62, and Fraser 1972: 436–37 and nn. 500–6.

⁷⁸ Decans: Riess fr. 13 (Firm. Mat. 4.22.1–7, 20); *septizonium* and lunar orbit: Riess fr. 2 (Plin *HN* 2.88); terms: Riess fr. 3 (Porph. *in Ptol.* 41 p. 212, 14–17).

⁷⁹ Moon at conception and birth: Riess fr. 14 (Procl. *In R.* II 59.3–60.2); Part of Fortune: fr. 19 (Vett. Val. 3.11.2–4); calculation of lifespan: frs. 16–18 (Firm. Mat. 8.2, Plin. *HN* 7.160, Vett. Val. 3.7.1–15); climacteries: fr. 23 (Vett. Val. 3.8.1, 5, 7, 12, 14); οἰκοδεσπότης: fr. 24 (Vett. Val. 2.41.2–3); operative month and καταρχαί: frs. 20–21 (Vett. Val. 5.4.1–3; 7.6.1–26, 35, 117–27, 161–63, 193–214); on the latter, see also Kroll 1935: 2162.

⁸⁰ Eclipses: Riess frs. 6–7 (Heph. Astr. 1.21–22), fr. 8 (Lydus *Ost.* 9c, 9a); cf. also *CCAG* VII 132ff.; comets: frs. 9–11 (Lydus *Ost.* 11–15b, Heph. Astr. 1.24.5–12, Serv. *comm. in Aen.* X.272); Sothis: fr. 12 (Heph. Astr. 1.23).

almost the entire range of Late Antique astrological wisdom, and must have included under its umbrella a wide array of treatises on technical and interpretative techniques as well as theoretical elaborations.

To understand Thessalos' connection to this varied astrological literature, however, it is more profitable to turn to the two authorial personae who gave it coherence. Little is known about Petosiris; his Egyptian name (*P3-ti-Wsir*) is authentic, but relatively common, and it offers no further clues to his identity (I shall return to him later).⁸¹ The pharaoh Nechepso, on the other hand, was a king of the Saïte dynasty, though the unusual form of his name made his precise identity obscure for a long time. The fragments of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* include the name Nechepsos (Νεχεψώς) as the second or third king of his 26th dynasty.⁸² In these lists, he is one of three or four rulers preceding Psammetichus I, the king normally considered the historical founder of the Saïte dynasty. There is, however, no independent evidence of a Nechepso(s) who ruled at Saïs before Psammetichus. Some have suspected that Nechepso(s) was not the name of a separate ruler, but the Saïte royal name Necho expanded with the addition of an epithet,⁸³ and this has finally been confirmed by Kim Ryholt's discovery of a few Demotic writings of the name Nechepsos in papyri of the late Ptolemaic and Roman periods.⁸⁴ These writings show that the name Nechepsos was derived from the Egyptian "Necho the wise" (*Ny-k3.w p3 šš*).⁸⁵ One example of the name occurs in a fragmentary Demotic narrative text, in which the protagonist seeks help from the pharaoh in obtaining the income he

⁸¹ Connections between this Petosiris and the owner of the early Ptolemaic tomb described by Lefebvre 1923–24 are speculative. The latter Petosiris appears to have been the recipient of funerary cult, and in one Greek inscription on the facade of the tomb (Bernand 1969: 494–98, no. 125), he is praised as a wise man (σοφός). There is, however, no other evidence that connects the occupant of the tomb with astrological wisdom. Likewise, the Petosiris buried at Atfih in a tomb with an astrological ceiling (Daressy 1902; Neugebauer and Parker 1969: 64–67, 216) cannot be connected to the Nechepso–Petosiris tradition.

⁸² Waddell frs. 68–69 (*FGrHist* 609 F2, F3a–b). The name Nechepsos is the more correct version of the name (see Ryholt forthcoming a and Heilen forthcoming), but since Nechepso is more common and Thessalos uses this name, I have followed suit.

⁸³ Ray (1974) proposed that Nechepso be identified with a possible early prince of the Saïte dynasty, Nekau-ba (*N(y)-k3.w-b3*), whose hieroglyphic name, attested on a *menat* fragment, was later interpreted as "Necho the Ram" (*N(y)-k3.w p3 sr*). Krauss and Fecht (1981) disputed the existence of this ruler and suggested that Nechepso be identified with Necho II, and that the name Nechepso was merely the Saïte royal name Necho (*N(y)-k3.w*), with the addition of the epithet *p3 ny-sw.t* "the king" to differentiate him from the father of Psammetichus I (*N(y)-k3.w p3-(ny)-sw.t* > Νεχεψώς). Redford (1981) argued that the epithet was *p3 Šsw(w)* "the Saïte."

⁸⁴ Ryholt forthcoming a.

⁸⁵ The Demotic writing of the word *šš* ends with the animal determinative, and thus the word is actually "hartebeest" (a kind of antelope – Coptic 𐩔𐩨𐩩) but, as Ryholt explains, this apparently odd epithet is derived from the earlier hieroglyphic *šš* – a homonym of *šš* "wise."

is owed as a priest of Amun-Re and Harsaphes.⁸⁶ In the course of his petition, the priest mentions that he wrote mortuary texts for the previous king, whose death was associated with the omen of an eclipse. Since this previous king is named Psammetichus, and the present king is Nechepso, the latter must be Necho II, who ruled 610–595 BCE.⁸⁷ This interpretation finds support in a second-century CE horoscope papyrus from Upper Egypt that begins with a brief prologue attributing astrological authority to Petosiris and “King Necheus” (a variant of the name Necho). Even in some ancient Greek texts, therefore, the connection between Nechepso and Necho was already understood.⁸⁸ There is no reason to believe, however, that the second king of the Saïte dynasty was actually an astrologer. In all likelihood, celestial wisdom later became associated with Necho II owing to the eclipse that occurred at the end of his predecessor’s reign.⁸⁹

The Nechepso literature has long been considered pseudepigraphical, since some of the longer passages on the interpretation of omens suggest that the earliest parts of this tradition were formed in Ptolemaic Egypt, probably in the second century BCE.⁹⁰ According to Vettius Valens, Nechepso gave rising times only for the latitude (*klima*) of Alexandria.⁹¹

⁸⁶ The narrative is known as the *Neue Demotische Erzählung*, and is attested in two papyri: *P. Berlin P. 13588* (Erichsen 1956), dated first century BCE and *P. Carlsb. 710 Recto*, from the Tebtunis temple library, dated first–second century CE (to be published in Ryholt forthcoming b).

⁸⁷ Ryholt has also argued that another Necho, given the epithet “beloved of Neith” (*Mr-N.t*) in Demotic narratives, must be Necho I, the father of Psammetichus I and local dynast from Saïs who became the client-king of Assurbanipal.

⁸⁸ *P. Paris 19 bis* (part of the Salt collection), republished with commentary in Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 39–44. See the further discussion below. Two texts derived from Eusebius’ version of Manetho’s king-list also make the equation: Jer. *Chron.* Ol. 41, p. 97b (= *FGrH* 609 F3c p. 49, 25–26): *Necho secundus, qui et Nechepso*; the seventh-century CE *Chronicon Paschale* (page 225, line 11) refers to “Necho a.k.a. Nechepso” (Νεχσῶ τῷ καὶ Νεχεψῶ).

⁸⁹ This is the argument of Ryholt forthcoming a. In this regard, note also the introduction to an astrological moon book (σεληνοδρόμιον) based on two separate traditions, one attributed to Nechepso, and the other written in the age of Psammetichus (*CCAG* VIII, 4 p. 105.1–9), cited by Festugière 1950: 206–7, 230. In general, there may have been a tradition of attributing prophetic wisdom to the early Saïte kings. The dramatic date of the *Prophecy of the Lamb* was in the reign of Bocchoris of the 24th Dynasty, a brief precursor to the 26th Dynasty also based at Saïs.

⁹⁰ For discussion of the historical references in the work, see Kroll 1935: 2164; Fraser 1972: 1.436–37, 2.631–32 nn. 493–99; Schwartz 1980: 315–18; Barton 1994: 27; Heilen forthcoming: 2. A few of the predictions also presuppose the work of Hypsicles, who was active in the middle of the second century BCE (Fraser 1972: 1.437).

⁹¹ Vett. Val. 3.13.6. Another argument for second-century BCE Alexandria as the context for the production of at least part of the Nechepso tradition is the iambic trimeter used in the surviving metrical fragments. S. Heilen (forthcoming) has pointed out that Apollodorus of Athens (ca. 180–110 BCE), a disciple of Aristarchus of Samothrace at the library of Alexandria, was the first to use this meter for didactic poetry. This pattern was followed in the geographical poem of Pseudo-Scymnus in the 130s BCE. The metrical fragments of Nechepso could have been composed around the same time.

And in other ways, the geographical horizons of the text are those of the Ptolemaic kingdom. Egypt, Syria, and other lands of the eastern Mediterranean basin are mentioned most frequently and those to the west only occasionally.⁹² Some predictions appear to refer to political events in the period from ca. 220 to 145 BCE.⁹³ An interpretation of a lunar eclipse, for example, presages the landing of a foreign king on Cyprus, and also mentions a separate kingdom in Cyrene, circumstances that resemble the conflict between Ptolemy VI Philometor and his brother in the middle of the 160s BCE.⁹⁴ There are references to hostilities between Egypt and Syria, perhaps reflecting the battle of Raphia (217 BCE), and/or the invasion of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (168 BCE).⁹⁵ The temporal and geographical coordinates, along with the appeal to the authority of an Egyptian pharaoh, suggest that the earliest astrological texts going under the name of Nechepso were produced in Ptolemaic Egypt by members of a bilingual literate indigenous élite. The work of Manetho, and the traces of some Egyptian contemporaries of his, show that such individuals existed very early in the Ptolemaic period, but the overall evidence of bilingualism, dual names, intermarriage, and Egyptians serving in the Ptolemaic administration tends to increase at the beginning of the second century BCE.⁹⁶ It was individuals from this world of indigenous élites, serving in the Egyptian priesthoods but also familiar with the Greek world of the government, who wrote what remains of Graeco-Egyptian literature, including the Nechepso texts. These were texts that were in part rooted in Egyptian literary traditions, but (like their authors) showed an awareness of and orientation toward the Greek-language communities of Ptolemaic Egypt and the wider Mediterranean world.⁹⁷ The Nechepso literature is part of this category, but, as I shall argue in what follows, it also represents a relatively successful cultural strategy of “Egyptianization” – an attempt to integrate a

⁹² See Kroll 1935: 2163 and Fraser 1972: 1.437.

⁹³ Schwartz 1980: 318; Heilen forthcoming points to a prediction in *CCAG* VII, p. 149, ll. 4–5 (fr. + 32 in his revised catalogue of the Nechepso–Petosiris fragments) that presupposes the relative freedom of the Greeks before the destruction of Corinth in 146 BCE.

⁹⁴ Riess fr. 6 (Heph. Astr. 1.21.19, following the chapter divisions in Pingree 1973–74). For the latter, see Fraser 1972: 1.437, 2.631–32 nn. 494–95.

⁹⁵ Riess fr. 6 (Heph. Astr. 1.21.22, 1.21.13). See Fraser 1972: 1.437, 2.632 n. 496; Kroll 1935: 2164; Schwartz 1980: 317–18.

⁹⁶ There is a wide array of scholarship on élite Egyptians who were able to participate in both the Greek and Egyptian linguistic and cultural communities of Ptolemaic Egypt, and I present here only a selection of studies on this milieu: Yoyotte 1969, Peremans 1970, Clarysse 1985, Clarysse 2000, Blasius 2001, Baines 2004, Gorre 2009a, Moyer forthcoming a, forthcoming b.

⁹⁷ On Graeco-Egyptian literature and its milieu, see Quack 2005, and Dieleman and Moyer 2010.

heterogeneous array of ideas and practices (Greek, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian) into an Egyptian scheme of authoritative knowledge.

The evidence of astrology and astronomy in priestly circles and its historical development in Egypt illuminates the milieu in which the Nechepto literature was created, as well as its strategy of Egyptianization. Though the literary remains of the Nechepto tradition survive in Greek (or Latin), the literature and practice of astrology in Egypt were not restricted to a Greek ethnic milieu. In the period approximately contemporary with Thessalos, there is a wealth of evidence from both Demotic papyri and hieroglyphic temple inscriptions that demonstrates the incorporation of astrology into native Egyptian priestly learning and practice.⁹⁸ The most stunning visual testimonia are the zodiac ceilings at the Ptolemaic and Roman period temples of Edfu, Dendara, Esna, Shenhur, and Akhmim as well as the zodiacs in the tomb of Petosiris near Dakhla and in several Theban coffin lids.⁹⁹ The less spectacular medium of papyrus has preserved numerous Roman period documents showing that priests were composing and copying treatises on astrology, and actively engaged in the practice of casting horoscopes. In fact, the earliest horoscope so far discovered in Egypt is on a Demotic ostrakon in the Ashmolean Museum and dates to just before the beginning of the Roman period (38 BCE); several other such ostraka have also been found dating to the first century CE.¹⁰⁰ Manuals and tables, the tools of the astrologer's trade, also appear among the Demotic papyri. These include a handbook dated ca. 75–225 CE giving natal predictions based on the positions of the planets in the astrological portions and houses, and a fragmentary late Ptolemaic or Roman period text on judicial omens relating to the position of the planets at the rising of Sothis.¹⁰¹ Other papyri contain aids to calculation such as tables for the positions of planets and records of celestial observations.¹⁰² Demotic ostraka from Narmuthis

⁹⁸ On this issue, see Dieleman 2003a, 2003b. For surveys of the Demotic material, see Bohleke 1996: 20–34 and Depauw 1997: 105–7. On the milieu of Graeco-Egyptian astrologers more generally, see Derchain 1999.

⁹⁹ See the monuments discussed in Neugebauer and Parker 1969: 203–12. For the tomb of Petosiris at Dakhla see Fakhry 1982: 96, 98 and pl. 38–41, 43–44.

¹⁰⁰ See Bohleke 1996: 20; for further bibliography see Depauw 1997: 150. Other ostraka from Medinet Madi, dating as late as 171 CE, record the positions of planets in the zodiac. See Bohleke 1996: 22.

¹⁰¹ *P. Berlin* 8345, Hughes 1986; *P. Cairo* 31222, Hughes 1951. A fragmentary second-century CE papyrus, probably from Tebtunis, and now preserved in Copenhagen (*P. Carlsberg* 66) and Lille, appears to contain individual predictions depending on the date of birth in the decans. See Chauveau 1992 and Frandsen 1991: 7.

¹⁰² Demotic planetary tables include *P. Berlin* 8279 and the Stobart tablets, republished in Neugebauer and Parker 1969: 225–40. *P. CtyBR* 1132 (B) contains a Demotic table of terms. See Depuydt 1994 and Bohleke 1996: 35–45. For further references, see Depauw 1997: 105–6.

(modern Medinet Madi) even give an idea of the wage an Egyptian priest-astrologer might expect to earn for his services, and rules he should abide by when performing astrological calculations in the temple.¹⁰³

The world of Egyptian priest-astrologers was also, in many cases, a bilingual world. A recent survey of literary papyri found in the villages of the Fayyum shows that many of the Greek astrological papyri were composed, copied, or used by the same literate Egyptians of the priestly class that produced and used the Demotic material.¹⁰⁴ The best evidence comes from the large group of literary papyri from Tebtunis: ca. 94 Greek and 138 Egyptian papyri published so far.¹⁰⁵ Among the published and unpublished texts are nine Greek and around forty Demotic papyri bearing astronomical or astrological texts.¹⁰⁶ Many of these are “use texts” written in rapid hands on the back of previously used papyri, and intended for practical purposes rather than as fine copies. Some were found along with medical papyri in the storage areas of the temple, but most probably came from the homes of priestly families.¹⁰⁷ Though several distinctions can be drawn between the types of texts typically found in the Greek papyri versus the Demotic papyri at Tebtunis, astrological-astronomical texts and medical-botanical texts are the two most prominent genres in which there is significant overlap.¹⁰⁸ Typical Roman-period astrological texts – both interpretative or theoretical treatises and the practical tables used for calculating astronomical positions – were part of this bilingual category.¹⁰⁹ Two of the Demotic papyri, however, serve as a reminder that this scribal activity, though clearly engaged

¹⁰³ Dieleman 2003b: 277 translates *O.Medin.Madi* I 27 (Bresciani, Pernigotti, and Betrò 1983: 35–39), lines 12–15 (adopting the reedition of Hoffmann 2000: 45–46, pl. 9): “In case you are one who foretells fate regarding the dominant heavenly body of a man, you will make ten obols minus the costs which were made at your expense . . .” Aspects of the bilingualism of this text are discussed by Fewster 2002: 222–23 (though without the corrections made by Hoffmann). *O.Medin.Madi* II 82, lines 1–7 enjoins the astrologer not to let a child discover his calculations when making an astrological chart in the temple (see Gallo 1997: 86–87). Note also the 17 Greek ostraka (with some Demotic elements) dating to the second half of the second century CE with working notes for casting horoscopes, published and discussed by Baccani 1989, 1995; a Demotic example is *O.Medin.Madi* II 84 (Gallo 1997: 89).

¹⁰⁴ Van Minnen 1998.

¹⁰⁵ Van Minnen 1998: 114, 155–80. On the Egyptian material from Tebtunis (including an account of unpublished texts), see now Ryholt 2005.

¹⁰⁶ A few more could be added that are not yet published: *P.Fay* ined. s.n. (1–2), *P.Fay* ined. G^C36 (1–2) and (possibly) *P. dem.* Carlsberg Committee no. 10850. For the Egyptian texts, see Ryholt 2005: esp. 152–53.

¹⁰⁷ Van Minnen 1998: 161 n. 226, 166. ¹⁰⁸ Van Minnen 1998: 178–79.

¹⁰⁹ The following are some examples. Interpretative/theoretical treatises: in Greek: *P.Tebt.* 2.276, *P.Oslo* 3.74; in Demotic: *P.Carlsb.* 66 + *P.Lille* (see Chauveau 1992). Astronomical tables: in Greek: E.E.S. inv. 79/82 (1–2), E.E.S. inv. 79/1 (1)b (see Jones 1998); in Demotic: *P.Carlsb.* 9 recto, *P.Carlsb.* 31–32. There are also some Roman-period hieratic texts from Tebtunis that include material on the decans, the hours of day and night, and the lunar month: *P.Carlsb.* II, Papyri I–III (see Osing 1998: 187–211, 221–25, 261–63).

with a wider Hellenistic intellectual and literary world, continued a long-standing indigenous Egyptian tradition. These papyri, dating to the second century CE, preserve two versions of a Demotic commentary on a depiction of the sky goddess Nut, the associated hieroglyphic texts describing the sun's movement through her, and the appearance and disappearance of the decans during the course of the year. The image and the texts date back at least to the reign of Seti I (1303–1290 BCE), so the priests at Tebtunis were preserving and studying indigenous traditions that went back almost 1,500 years.¹¹⁰

Though the quantitative weight of Roman-period papyri shows that astronomy and astrology truly flourished in Egypt in the first three centuries CE, Egyptian priests cultivated these areas of intellectual and literary practice earlier.¹¹¹ Predictive astrology based on the positions of the stars and planets was not, strictly speaking, native to earlier Egyptian civilization, but developed in Mesopotamia through the systematic collection and interpretation of celestial omens.¹¹² An astronomical tradition, however, had been cultivated in Egypt for centuries, as I just noted in connection with the Tebtunis papyri. “Hour-priests” (*imy-wnw.t* or *wnw.ti*) in the Ptolemaic age,¹¹³ like their predecessors, continued to measure the hours of the night and the days of the calendar by observing the succession of the

¹¹⁰ *P. Carlsb.* 1 and 1a. These texts comment on the depictions of Nut and related texts that are known from the ceiling of the sarcophagus chamber of the cenotaph of Seti I at Abydos, and the ceiling of Hall E in the tomb of Ramses IV (no. 2) in the Valley of the Kings. See Neugebauer and Parker 1960: 36–94 and the new edition by von Lieven 2007. It is possible that these texts go back as early as the Middle Kingdom (Neugebauer and Parker 1960: 54).

¹¹¹ According to figures provided by the Leuven Database of Ancient Books (www.trismegistos.org/ldab/), 92% of the astrological and astronomical papyri dated ca. 300 BCE to 300 CE belong to the first 3 centuries CE, and only 8% to the previous three centuries. Of course, far more papyri, including literary papyri, survive from the Roman period, and this must be taken into account. The difference between the two periods is less drastic, though still significant, if the figures are compared as a proportion of the total number of literary papyri in the respective periods. In this case, the percentage of literary papyri that were astrological or astronomical is 6.6% for I–III CE and 2.4% for the III–I BCE. In other words, a hypothetical corrected figure would put 73% in the first three centuries CE, and 27% in the previous three centuries.

¹¹² For a brief overview, see Pingree 1997: 11–20.

¹¹³ Several Ptolemaic-period hour-priests and chief hour-priests are known by name: e.g., the second century BCE chief hour-priest (*hry imy-wnw.t*) Imouthes, son of Kolluthes (= *Pros. Ptol.* VI 16567; see Spiegelberg 1912b); a statue of the chief hour-priest Nesmin (Cairo CG 680) dating to the early Ptolemaic period was also discovered at Medinet Habu (El-Sayed 1980). For further examples and discussion of this title, see Quaegebeur 1995: 150–51. Two hour-priests are attested in papyri from Deir el-Medina, dated 189 BCE and 137 BCE: Psenminis, son of Zmanres (*Pros. Ptol.* 16570a; see Botti 1967: no. 2a–b, l. 3) and Psenminis (a.k.a. Panehek), son of Phagonis (*Pros. Ptol.* 16570b; see Botti 1967: no. 8a, ll. 4–5 and no. 8b, ll. 5–6). Haryothes, an hour-priest in the temple of Tebtunis, serves as a notary for documents dated 129/8 BCE and 124/3 BCE (*P. Cairo Dem.* II.30607–30609; see Spiegelberg 1906–8: 29–36; Lüddeckens 1960). See also Harkhebi discussed below and also the Demotic funerary stela of Ashaikhy, who describes himself as “the one who knows the sky” (*rh p.t* – see Depauw 2001).

36 decans,¹¹⁴ a practice that was vital for performing traditional rites at the correct times. Naturally, temples continued to be the institutional repositories for the requisite astronomical knowledge.¹¹⁵ But despite this traditional and conservative context, Egyptian astronomy did not remain isolated. By the time Alexander the Great arrived, astronomy in Egypt had been part of a broader, international context for two or three centuries. Friedhelm Hoffmann's recent reassessment of an inscription from Tanis has proved that in the Saïte period Egyptians adopted Babylonian methods of calculating the varying length of day and night during the year.¹¹⁶ Out of intellectual interest or for practical reasons, Egyptian priests also exchanged information and methods with Greeks. Greek–Egyptian exchanges may even have begun before the Ptolemaic period with Eudoxus of Cnidus, who is reputed to have studied with Egyptian priests at Heliopolis in the 370s BCE.¹¹⁷ In the Ptolemaic period, this important early Greek astronomer was invoked in the *Art of Eudoxus*, a pseudonymous treatise on calendars and the motions of heavenly bodies that was part of the papyrus archive of Ptolemaios son of Glaukias, who lived in the Memphite Sarapieion in the middle of the second century BCE.¹¹⁸ The treatise, probably written around 190 BCE, includes comparisons of Greek and Egyptian calendrical systems, and illustrations of both zodiac signs and Egyptian figures. The *Art of Eudoxus* shares some of its material with an earlier calendrical work discovered at Hibeh that spells out more clearly the communication between Greeks and Egyptians in a preface.¹¹⁹ The author, who wrote early in the Ptolemaic period

¹¹⁴ These decans, the thirty-six groups of rising stars that each defined an Egyptian ten-day week, were governed by particular divinities, and became an important part both of Late Egyptian religion and of the theoretical apparatus of later astrology. See Kákosy 1982. For a brief comparison of the decans at Edfu and those in Hephaestion of Thebes and Firmicus Maternus, see Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 5–6. See also the use of the decans in the Nechepso fragments cited above. This Egyptian astrological concept spread far from its origins as is attested by the astrological tablets, dated to the 170s CE, found at Grand in the north-east of France (Abry 1993).

¹¹⁵ At Edfu, for example, the House of Life shrine (dated 140–124 BCE) contains books of the “knowledge of the recurrence of the two stars [the sun and the moon]” and of the “control over the recurrence of the stars.” See Chassinat 1928: 339–51. The same temple contains a well known astronomical frieze dating to the reign of Ptolemy VII Euergetes II, which depicts, among other figures, the decans. For illustrations, see Parker 1950: pls. IV and V.

¹¹⁶ Hoffmann forthcoming.

¹¹⁷ The most important sources are Strabo 17.1.29–30, Diog. Laert. 8.8.86, Sen. *Q. Nat.* 7.3.2 (Lasserre 1966: T7, T12–13, T15); see also the discussion of other sources in Lasserre 1966: 139–41.

¹¹⁸ *P.Paris* 1. Text: Blass 1997. The illustrations can be seen in Neugebauer 1975: 3.1435, pl. VII; Weitzmann 1947: fig. 37; Weitzmann 1959: fig. 2; Paris-Musées 1998: 119–23; Legras 2002b: pl. XI. For discussion, see Neugebauer 1975: 2.686–89; Thompson 1987: 107–9 and 1988: 252–54.

¹¹⁹ *P.Hib.* 1 27. This papyrus and *P.Paris* 1 show general similarities in content, and two passages have similar wording. Compare *P.Hib.* 1 27, ll. 28–30 with *P.Paris* 1, col. XXI, ll. 14–16; and *P.Hib.* 1 27, ll. 41–54 with *P.Paris* 1, col. III, ll. 20–27. See Neugebauer 1975: 2.687–89.

(ca. 300 BCE), explains that he learned the matter of his treatise in Saïs from a very wise man, probably an Egyptian, who “demonstrated the entire truth in practice using the stone dial, which in Greek is called the gnomon.”¹²⁰ The text itself is a calendar which lists the lengths of the day and the night, astronomical and meteorological events, and the Egyptian religious festivals held at Saïs.¹²¹ Translation could also go in the other direction. A Demotic papyrus from the early first century BCE preserves on the recto a list of lunar eclipses calculated using the Greek Callippic period, and on the verso a means of computing the dates of solstices and equinoxes, which is comparable to that of the *Art of Eudoxus*.¹²² Such information was of obvious interest and use to the Egyptian hour-priests who were responsible for calendars and astronomical calculations, and it appears to have been an area of active intellectual exchange between Greeks and Egyptians in the Ptolemaic period.¹²³

Though astrology itself was an import to Egypt,¹²⁴ it could be adopted to form an apparently natural component of the hour-priest’s functions. At the same time as the Nechepso literature was developing, the astronomer

¹²⁰ *P.Hib.* I 27, ll. 19–28: ... ἐν Σαί πανύ ἀνὴρ σοφὸς καὶ ἡμῶν χρεῖαν ἔχων, ἔχομεγ γὰρ τὸν Σαίτην νομὸν ἔτη πέντε. πᾶσαν οὖν τὴν ἀλήθει[αν] ἡμῖν ἐξετίθι καὶ ἐπ[ι τοῦ] ἔργου ἐδίκνουν ἐκ τοῦ ὅλμου τοῦ λιθίνου [ὅς ἐκ]αλείτο Ἑλληνιστὶ [γν]ώμων. Though the ethnic identities of the teacher and the student are not made explicit, the translation of the “stone dial” into Greek, and the later reference to the practices of the ἀστρολόγοι and the ἱερογραμματεῖς, suggest the perspective of someone outside Egyptian culture who is translating it into Greek terms. Egyptians did indeed make use of stone sundials and shadow clocks in the pharaonic period and in the period approximately contemporary with this reference. See Clagett 1995: 83–98.

¹²¹ A third-century BCE Greek papyrus fragment (*P.Petr.* 3 134) may contain the remains of a similar calendar text referring to decans and festivals. *P.Ryl.* 589 contains a text dated ca. 180 BCE explaining the 25-year period that relates the lunar months to the Egyptian 365-day calendar as well as the passage of the sun through the signs of the zodiac. This text is on the same papyrus as a ledger of debts due to an association or gymnasium.

¹²² *P.Berlin* 13146 and 13147. On the lunar eclipse text see Neugebauer, Parker, and Zauzich 1981 together with Jones 1999: 87–88; Jones 2000: 147–48. On the solstice and equinox calculation, see Parker and Zauzich 1981, Neugebauer, Parker, and Zauzich 1981: 323 and Neugebauer 1975: 2.627–29.

¹²³ Several texts composed in the Ptolemaic period undoubtedly survive only in papyri dating to the Roman period. In discussing the astrological text of Lille and Copenhagen, Chauveau 1992: 105 has suggested that the text may have been composed before the Roman period. The text of *O.Stras.* D521, a list of zodiac signs and planets, though written in the first century CE, seems to date from the Ptolemaic period. The assignment of the signs to Egyptian months dates the original text to ca. 370–130 BCE. *P.Oxy.* 3 465, containing an astrological calendar in Greek which describes constellations and decanal divinities and their influences and omens, is late second century CE in date, but the content suggests a Ptolemaic date of composition.

¹²⁴ Hdt. 2.82 attributes to the Egyptians the discovery of the science of predicting a man’s fortune from the day of his birth, but this is a kind of hemerology based on the assignment of days to particular deities. Egyptian calendars of lucky and unlucky days that refer to mythological events and figures have indeed been preserved. This learning would have been the preserve of priests, possibly hour-priests. For references see Dieleman 2003a: 139–40; 2003b: 278–79.

and snake-charmer Harkhebi claimed to understand the predictions made by celestial bodies.¹²⁵ Harkhebi's biography is inscribed in hieroglyphs on the back pillar and left leg of his statue, a standing male figure dressed in the traditional Egyptian *šndyt* kilt. On the basis of an astronomical allusion in the text, Harkhebi is known to have lived and carried out his duties in the period 154–130 BCE.¹²⁶ Though the text does not specifically mention the title of “hour priest” (*imy-wnw.t*), it is clear from the description of his service that he performed the duties of this priestly office. Harkhebi is “he who divides the hours according to the two periods [day and night] without a mistake in the night . . .” Other laudatory phrases refer to his ability to calculate the beginning of each month, and the heliacal rising of Sothis which heralded the beginning of the year.¹²⁷ In addition to the traditional activity of the *imy-wnw.t*, however, Harkhebi's biography also refers to the use of celestial observations to predict the future:

Clear-eyed in observing the stars, among which there is no erring,
Who announces rising and setting at their times, together with the gods who
foretell the future.

...

He who foretells the heliacal rising of Sothis at the first day of the year,
So that he observes her [Sothis] on the day of her first festival,
Having calculated her course according to the periods to which she is appointed,
Observing everything she does daily, so that all she has foretold is in his
charge . . .¹²⁸

The interpretative basis and orientation of these predictions is not made clear in the text, but it is unlikely that it refers to the casting of individual horoscopes in genethliological astrology, since Harkhebi is praised for revealing what he knows only to the “lord of the two lands,” the pharaoh.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ See Derchain 1989; Dieleman 2003a, 2003b; Gorre 2009a: 368–72, no. 72. For the statue of another Ptolemaic period astronomer, Senty, son of Paensobek, see Daressy 1919: 276–78 and Clagett 1995: 2.490.

¹²⁶ Harkhebi is said to have observed the heliacal rising of Venus with Akh (the first decan of Pisces), which Derchain 1989: 87–88 argues most likely refers to occurrences of this phenomenon in the first few days of March in the years 154, 146, 138, and 130.

¹²⁷ “He who divides the hours according to the two periods, without a mistake in the night . . .”: (*šbšb wnw.wt r tr.wy nn tnm n grḥ*). This phrase is followed by a lacuna and then reference to “everything that is brought on the first day of the month.” See Derchain 1989: 78–79 and Dieleman 2003a: 143, 152. Harkhebi is also praised as “He who foretells the heliacal rising of Sothis at the first day of the year, so that he observes her [Sothis] on the first day of her festival.” Dieleman 2003a: 151.

¹²⁸ See Derchain 1989: 76–77; translation by Dieleman 2003a: 151.

¹²⁹ “He who does not disclose (anything) at all concerning his report after judgment, whose mouth is closed concerning all he has seen; he who does not give a bow because of that (?), he who opens his speech (only) to the lord of the two lands . . .” Translation Dieleman 2003a: 152. Cf. Derchain 1989: 79–80.

This priest's claimed skill more likely lay in predictions concerning the king or the entire land of Egypt based on the interpretation of celestial omens.¹³⁰ Harkhebi, in other words, would have been versed in precisely the sort of judicial omen literature mentioned previously, which forms the earliest dateable material of the Nechepto tradition. An example of the type of text that Harkhebi could have used has been found in an unpublished Demotic papyrus of Ptolemaic date in the British Museum (PBM inv. 10661), which contains predictions, connected with astronomical phenomena, of events happening in or to Egypt, Syria (or Assyria) and another country.¹³¹

This astrological omen literature, however, did not appear in Egypt in the middle of the Ptolemaic period, but was introduced at a much earlier date as R. A. Parker's publication of the well-known Vienna Demotic papyrus on eclipse and lunar omens definitively proved.¹³² The text, preserved in a Roman copy of the second century CE from Soknopaiou Nesos in the Fayyum, consists of two Demotic treatises on celestial omens, one of which was clearly copied and adapted by an Egyptian scribe using models derived from Babylonian omen literature.¹³³ In Text A, eclipses are organized and interpreted according to the Babylonian months in which they occur, rather than the signs of the zodiac. The correspondences between the Egyptian and Babylonian months, as set out in a concordance included in the text, indicate that the adaptation occurred ca. 625–482 BCE, i.e. under the Saïte dynasty or during first Persian occupation of Egypt. By the time the manuscript from Soknopaiou Nesos was produced, over 600 years later, the Babylonian astrological wisdom in the text had been connected to the Egyptian pharaoh Nechepto, a.k.a. Necho II.¹³⁴ Precisely when this connection was made is difficult to determine, but the motivation is clear. This king of the early 26th Dynasty could serve as an early Egyptian founding figure for a non-Egyptian form of wisdom, a figure who was known to have resisted the Babylonian invasion of Egypt, and to have come to the

¹³⁰ Dieleman 2003a: 145. ¹³¹ Andrews 1992: 13–14; 1994: 29, 31–32.

¹³² *P. Vindob.* D 6278, 6282, 6289, 6698, 10111 (Parker 1959). On the other literary papyri found at Soknopaiou Nesos, see Van Minnen 1998: 145–55.

¹³³ Parker 1959: 28–34. For a brief overview of Babylonian developments in astronomical observation and theory as well as astrology from the eighth to the fourth centuries BCE and the use of Babylonian ideas and practices in Egypt, see Barton 1994: 13–17, 24–25. Babylonian mathematical theories of planetary motion were adapted to the Egyptian calendar and used into the Roman period (see Jones 1999: 1.114–15).

¹³⁴ Parker 1959: 29–30. The reference to Nechepto (*Ny-k3.w p3 šš*) is a restoration to col. IV, line 10 proposed by Ryholt (forthcoming a) based on the final *š*, the animal skin determinative (which is unique among royal names) and the end of a cartouche, all of which are quite clear in the plate (Parker 1959: 21, pl. 3). Parker had interpreted these signs as the end of the name of the Persian king Darius, but Ryholt's restoration fits much better.

throne after an eclipse.¹³⁵ This royal patronage was clearly in the interests of Egyptian prestige, and may well have been devised in the Ptolemaic period when the Greek Nechepso tradition of astrology was taking shape. In the wider Mediterranean discourse on astrology, Nechepso could serve to contest the authoritative position and priority of the “Chaldaeans” as founders of the art. But while the astrological authority of Nechepso may have become implicated in a more general Greek exoticizing discourse on Egyptian wisdom, the specific choice of Nechepso was originally an Egyptian choice intended to “Egyptianize” astrology.¹³⁶

This case for seeing the Nechepso tradition as an effort originating among Egyptian priests and aimed at creating an indigenous historical and cultural identity for a heterogeneous body of astrological wisdom would remain largely circumstantial, but for a few tantalizing glimpses into its literary conventions. To explore these, it is necessary to turn to the figure of Petosiris, who goes unmentioned by Thessalos, but who is critical to the astrological tradition with which the Greek doctor engages in the autobiographical prologue to his treatise. In many Greek and Latin citations of Egyptian astrological wisdom, Petosiris occurs alongside Nechepso as a co-author or colleague, and the two figures form a recognizable pair in the literature.¹³⁷ Their relationship is not often made explicit, but it can be inferred from the epithets applied to them. Nechepso is always known as “the king” (ὁ βασιλεύς), and indeed he is sometimes invoked by this title alone. Petosiris, however, is never referred to with a royal title, and seems to have played the role of priest.¹³⁸ According to the *Suda*, Petosiris was a φιλόσοφος, who wrote on religious matters and the Egyptian mysteries, as

¹³⁵ Hdt. 2.159 mentions his defeat of the “Syrians” at Magdolus (Migdol) on the borders of Egypt (see Lipiński 1972). Necho II was also famous as the predecessor of Darius in digging a canal to the Red Sea, and he is said to have commissioned an expedition to circumnavigate Africa (Hdt. 2.159, 4.42). On the eclipse at the end of the reign of Psammetichus, see above.

¹³⁶ Cf. Dieleman 2003a: 140–41, who attributes the notion of Egypt as the origin of astrology to Greek, and especially Hellenistic representations. These representations, however, could just as well have Egyptian origins. Chaeremon, the Egyptian priest, Stoic philosopher, and tutor to Nero, gives a complex account of Egyptian astrological wisdom that seems partially to acknowledge some debt to the Chaldaeans (van der Horst 1984: fr. 2 = Michael Psellus, *Philosophica Minora* (ed. Duffy) 3.74–88). The debate is also referred to in other contemporary authors: Plin. *HN* 7.56.203; Joseph. *AJ* 1.168. Earlier, however, Diod. Sic. 1.81.6 (probably drawing on Hecataeus of Abdera, who wrote at the early Ptolemaic court) quotes Egyptians for the opinion that the Chaldaeans of Babylon learned astrology from Egyptian priests (see also 1.9.6, 1.16.1, 1.69.5).

¹³⁷ See Riess 1892: 327 and Kroll 1935: 2160.

¹³⁸ Cf. Riess 1892: 327: “Aegyptios eos fuisse, et quidem regem alterum, alterum sacerdotem, omnium auctorum consensu testatur.” Kroll 1935: 2160 suggested that the one possible reference to ὁ βασιλεύς Πετόςιρις in Vettius Valens (Riess fr. 18) should be emended to read ὁ βασιλεύς Πετοσίρει.

well as on astrology.¹³⁹ In one case, he is called μαθηματικός.¹⁴⁰ From some fragments, it appears that the communication between the two figures provided a frame for the astrological literature that went under their names.¹⁴¹ This communication is alluded to in mystical terms,¹⁴² and seems to have involved divine revelation as indicated by the vision of Nechepso discussed above, and a comment preserved in Proclus attributing to Petosiris the ability to invoke a direct vision of god.¹⁴³ Firmicus Maternus wrote that Nechepso and Petosiris interpreted and transmitted knowledge that they received from the gods.¹⁴⁴ The brief allusion to king Necheus in the second-century CE Salt papyrus (*P.Paris* 19bis) discussed earlier gives us a possible insight into the context of this interpretation and transmission. While introducing an elaborate horoscope, the astrologer, who seems to have worked in a mixed Greek–Egyptian environment, probably in Thebes,¹⁴⁵ briefly lays out the pedigree of his knowledge:

σκεψάμενος ἀπὸ πολλῶν βιβλίων, ὡς παρεδόθη ἡμῖν ἀπὸ σοφῶν ἀρχαίων τουτέστι Χαλδαίων καὶ [ΤΙ]ετόσιρις, μάλιστα δὲ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Νεχεὺς ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτοὶ συνήδρευσαν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἑρμοῦ καὶ Ἀσκληπιοῦ δ(ς) ἐστὶν ἱμοῦθου υἱὸς Ἡφαίστου . . .

After examining many books, as it has been transmitted to us from ancient wise men, that is the Chaldaeans and Petosiris, and especially king Necheus, just as

¹³⁹ Riess T. 1; fr. 8 (Lydus *Ost.* 9) refers to Πετοσιριακαὶ παραδόσεις. Petosiris is also called a φιλόσοφος in Riess fr. 39.

¹⁴⁰ Riess fr. 41 (cod. Paris 2419. fo. 32r).

¹⁴¹ The epistolary fiction discussed below seems to be a later manifestation of this tradition. See Riess frs. 37–41.

¹⁴² See Vett. Val. 3.7.2–3: ὃν καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Πετοσίρει ἐδήλωσεν μυστικῶς (= Riess fr. 18) and Vett. Val. 9.11.7 (= T. + 2 in Heilen forthcoming): καθάπερ ὁ Πετόσιρις τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκτίθεται.

¹⁴³ Riess fr. 33 (Procl. *In R.* II 344, 26–345, 4 Kroll).

¹⁴⁴ Firm. Mat. 3.1.1: [Nechepso and Petosiris] *secuti Aesculapium et Hanubium, quibus potentissimum Mercurii numen istius scientiae secreta commisit*; 4.3.5: *omnia quae Aesculapio Mercurius et Chnubis tradiderunt, quae Petosiris explicavit et Nechepso*. See also Kroll 1935: 2161.

¹⁴⁵ *P.Paris* 19 bis (= *P.Louvre* 2342 bis), ll. 2–6. See Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 39–43. The text from which this citation comes is one of three related papyri (the other two are *P.Paris* 19 and *P.Lond.* 110), said to come from Thebes, which contain horoscopes all relating to one Anoubion son of Psansnos (Ψανσνῶς). Though the name Anoubion is a Greek name (based on an Egyptian god), his father's name is Egyptian, transcribing *Pj-sn-snwj* “The two brothers” in the dialectical form of southern Egypt (see Quaegebeur 1992: 268), thus possibly confirming the Theban origin. Further support for the Theban origin of this text comes from the particular divine authorities cited. From the reign of Ptolemy VIII, Imhotep shared a small temple (the Qasr el ‘Aguz) with Thoth (i.e. Hermes) near Medinet Habu. Ryholt (forthcoming a), on the other hand, has recently argued that the Hermes of *P.Paris* 19bis is to be equated with Amenhotep son of Hapy. He cites Clem Al. *Strom.* 1.21.134.1, who mentions “Hermes the Theban and Asclepius the Memphite” as examples of men who came to be reputed as gods among the Egyptians. If Ryholt's suggestion is accepted, the pair in the Salt papyrus would be equivalent to Amenhotep son of Hapy and Imhotep, who shared a shrine at Deir el-Bahri on the west bank of Thebes. See further below.

they themselves took counsel [concerning what was transmitted] from our lord Hermes and Asklepios, who is Imouthes son of Hephaistos . . . [the author then goes on to his calculations].

As in the testimonia from Firmicus Maternus, Petosiris and Nechepso receive and transmit knowledge from the gods. The term συνεδρεύω normally refers to a meeting in council – in this case, perhaps an allusion to deliberations at court between the king and the priest.¹⁴⁶

These allusions, fleeting though they may be, trace out a frame for the Nechepso–Petosiris literature, a frame modeled, at least in part, on a well-known motif in Egyptian literature: the heroic priest who performs magical marvels at court or presents hidden divine wisdom to the king. This narrative motif goes back at least to the Middle Kingdom tale of King Khufu and the magician Djedi in the Westcar Papyrus,¹⁴⁷ but there are many more examples from later periods of Egyptian literature.¹⁴⁸ Among these is the story of Merire, a skilled magician and excellent scribe, who is excluded from the royal court by his rivals, but eventually summoned back by the king Si-Sobek. Merire finds favor with him when it is discovered that he has the knowledge necessary to extend the king's life beyond its appointed limit.¹⁴⁹ The best-known examples of this literature are the stories surrounding Setne Khamwas (historically, the fourth son of Rameses II), preserved in Demotic texts of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods.¹⁵⁰ In the story of Si-Osire, Setne's son is presented at court and meets a magical challenge by reading a sealed document in the hand of a Nubian prince who has come to taunt the Egyptian priests about their lack

¹⁴⁶ The usage “συνεδρεύω ἀπὸ + someone” in the sense of “take counsel from” is not found in *LSJ* (cf. Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 42). The expression of the entire sentence is quite compressed and the sense, by analogy with the previous use of ἀπὸ, seems to be that Nechepso and Petosiris took counsel together or met in council (concerning the ancient wisdom transmitted) *from* the gods, as I have indicated in my translation. This could refer to a dialogue between Nechepso, Petosiris, and Asclepius similar in form to those found in the *Hermetica*, or in the Demotic *Book of Thoth* (Jasnow and Zauzich 2005).

¹⁴⁷ *P. Berlin* 3033. For a translation, see Lichtheim 1973: 217–20.

¹⁴⁸ For overviews of this literature, see Dieleman 2005: 222–38, Ryholt 1999: 81–87, and Depauw 1997: 87–88, 92.

¹⁴⁹ *P. Vandier* is written in a hieratic that has been dated palaeographically to the late seventh or sixth century BCE. See the publication by Posener 1985, and also Fischer-Elfert 1987. For the revised palaeographical dating, see Verhoeven 2001: 327–37.

¹⁵⁰ The two principal surviving narratives are preserved in *P. Cairo* 30646 of Ptolemaic date (known as Setne I), and *P. British Museum* 604 verso of Roman date (known as Setne II). For English translations, see Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 453–89. The cycle of stories must date much earlier than these major texts, since an Aramaic papyrus of the third quarter of the fifth century BCE (Porten and Yardeni 1993: 54–55, Text Cl.2; Porten 2004: 453–54) includes a tale, related to Egyptian antecedents, about Hor son of Punesh, a character in Setne II. For discussion, see Porten 2004: 434–38, 443–44; Hoffmann and Quack 2007: 118. On the story of Si-Osire as part of the literary world of the Late Period Egyptian priest-magician, see Gordon 1997: 70–72.

of magical prowess. Si-Osire's reading subsequently provokes another tale of magical duels at court from a bygone age. In the story of Naneferkaptah, Setne discovers a magical book of Thoth in the tomb of Naneferkaptah, which Setne reports to the king. The king urges him to return the book to its owner, which Setne eventually does after his misadventures with Tabubu.

Petese, son of Petetum, is the protagonist of another important cycle of narratives about a heroic priest.¹⁵¹ One of the Petese stories is of particular interest for the present discussion. It is preserved in two unpublished papyri of the second century CE (*P.CtYBR* 422 verso and *P.Lund* 2058 verso) that were part of the Tebtunis temple library described earlier. In the story, a papyrus is discovered when a block falls out of a wall in the temple at Heliopolis. Only the priest Petese is able to decipher the papyrus. He presents it to the king, and is duly rewarded. An extract from the papyrus then follows under the heading "Behold a copy of the book of Imhotep the great, son of Ptah, the great god" (*tw-s ḥ.t p3 dm^c 'Iy-m-ḥtp wr s3 Pth p3 ntr* 3). This book is one of four astrological treatises in the Tebtunis temple library ascribed to Imhotep, the Egyptian equivalent of Asclepius.¹⁵² The research of Kim Ryholt mentioned earlier has shown that the pharaoh in the prefatory tale is none other than Nechepso (*N3w-k3w p3 šš*). The magician Petese, moreover, is almost certainly the Petosiris who presents astrological wisdom to Nechepso in the Greek and Latin fragments of this tradition. As Ryholt has pointed out, the Demotic Egyptian writings of the names Petese (*P3-t3-3s.t*) and Petosiris (*P3-t3-Wsir*) are distinguishable only by a divine determinative at the end of the latter. If, however, the name Petese referred to a deified individual, the divine determinative could be added to the name, making the writing of the two names identical.¹⁵³ Petosiris, in other words, is the legendary priest Petese about whom stories were composed in Demotic Egyptian as early as the fourth century BCE.¹⁵⁴ In the texts from Tebtunis, this priest is the central character in a narrative that endows an astrological treatise with authority, authenticity, and prestige by telling of its marvelous discovery, its divine authorship, and its acceptance

¹⁵¹ Quack 2002; 2005: 20, 69–73.

¹⁵² For references to the unpublished text of *P.CtYBR* 422, see Ryholt 1999: 81–82; Ryholt 2006: 13. The other astrological manuals ascribed to Imhotep (also unpublished) are: PSI inv. D 35 vo., *P.Carlsberg* 66 + *P.Lille* (see Chauveau 1992), and PSI inv. D 39 ro. See Ryholt 2009: n. 30. I am grateful to Kim Ryholt for drawing my attention to these further references.

¹⁵³ Ryholt forthcoming a.

¹⁵⁴ Ryholt 1999: 88–91. This tradition may go back even earlier to an abnormal hieratic text of the seventh–eighth century CE (*P.Queen's College*) as Joachim Quack has suggested (2002: 78). There are also traces of Petese under the name Petesios or Petasis in Greek and Arabic texts on astrology, plants, and alchemy (see Quack 2002).

and approval at the court of the pharaoh. The use of such stories to add value to ritual or scientific texts has a long history in Egypt, and clearly continued into the latest phases of Egyptian literature.¹⁵⁵ In the second century BCE, the authors of the astrological wisdom of Nechepso and Petosiris used this very same strategy, drawing on the motif of the priest at court to endow their texts with divine and royal authority, and an Egyptian pedigree.

When this literary convention is taken into consideration, Thessalos' intervention in the Nechepso tradition takes on a surprising significance, since his epistolary prologue to the emperor both alludes to and appropriates the structures through which Egyptian astrological literature authorized itself. A later development of the Nechepso–Petosiris literature and its framing device of communication between priest and king was, in fact, the fiction of a letter written by Petosiris to King Nechepso. Manuscripts containing astrological miscellanies have preserved several related forms of a letter that presents a method of prognostication based on names and the days of the month.¹⁵⁶ References to gladiators in this group of texts suggest that they may date to the Roman period, and the means of divination seem only distantly connected to the earliest astrological materials of the Nechepso–Petosiris tradition, so these letters are probably later

¹⁵⁵ See Dieleman 2005: 282–83, who provides as examples *P.Berlin* 3038 (a New Kingdom medical papyrus), and the postscript to Spell 30B of the *Book of the Dead* (among others), which continued to be copied by Egyptian scribes into the Ptolemaic period. The excerpt from *P.Berlin* 3038, 1–5 (§163a) describes a collection of prescriptions for inflammation discovered in a chest of documents under a statue of Anubis in Letopolis, and used by a priest to heal the pharaoh Senedj. See Wildung 1969: 21–25, 49–51. The postscript to *Book of the Dead* Spell 30B says that the spell was discovered in the reign of Menkaure (Mycerinus) on a brick of hematite under a god's statue (or, in one version, on a papyrus roll in a hidden box) by prince Hordjedef in Hermopolis, and that the prince “obtained it by entreaty and brought it like a marvel to the king, when he saw that it was a great secret, unseen and unbeheld.” See Wildung 1969: 217–21.

¹⁵⁶ Riess frs. 37–42. Fr. 38 has a more elaborate epistolary introduction, while frs. 39 and 40 are more abbreviated. Fr. 37 is a Latin translation derived from fr. 39. Frs. 41–42 are diagrams that go along with the letters in some cases. There are several versions of these basic types that were not known to Riess. Versions of fr. 38 are found in Cod. Paris. Suppl. gr. 637, fo. 59 (*CCAG* VIII.3, p. 76), Cod. Oxon. Baroccianus 70, fo. 379 (*CCAG* IX.1, p. 4), Cod. Oxon. Baroccianus 166, fo. 163v (*CCAG* IX.1, p. 19), and (though somewhat abridged) Cod. Lugd. Bat. Vossianus Graec. Fol. 59, fo. 279v (*CCAG* IX.2, p. 94). A version of fr. 39 with a longer ending is found in Cod. Mutin. 174, fo. 262 (*CCAG* IV, p. 34, and pp. 120–21), Cod. Vat. Barberin. 114, fo. 7 (*CCAG* V.4, p. 35), and Cod. Paris gr. 2847, fo. 169 (*CCAG* VIII.4, p. 72). Cod. Flor. Laur. 86, 14, ff. 95v–96 preserves a version similar to fr. 39 and the diagrams in frs. 41–42 (*CCAG* IV, p. 76). Other versions of fr. 39 include: Cod. Vat. 952, fo. 175 (*CCAG* V.4, p. 11), Cod. Vat. Pal. 312, fo. 1 (*CCAG* V.4, p. 72), Cod. Paris. gr. 2419, fo. 32 (*CCAG* VIII.1, p. 26), Cod. Oxon. Cromwellianus 12, p. 1214 (*CCAG* IX.1, p. 50), and Cod. Cantab. Collegii S. Trinitatis R.15.36, fo. 87 (*CCAG* IX.2, p. 53). Another version of fr. 40 is found in Cod. Paris. Suppl. gr. 446, fo. 43v (*CCAG* VIII.3, p. 75), and a similar text is in Cod. Paris. gr. 2426, fo. 6v (*CCAG* VIII.3, p. 60).

elaborations.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, a fragment of a letter on astrological name divination suggests that this epistolary fiction was a standard feature of the literature, since it refers to treatises on the planets that Petosiris addressed to king Nechepso.¹⁵⁸ In a text included in another astrological miscellany, Petosiris also wrote to the king about astrological means for determining good or bad months for an undertaking (περὶ μηνὸς ἀγαθοῦ καὶ φαύλου).¹⁵⁹ Letters of instruction written by a sage to a king are one of the literary fictions used in the *Hermetica* and related literature, including the magical papyri. Such introductory texts, which were meant to add prestige to spells in the Greek magical papyri, were probably devised in late Ptolemaic Egypt at roughly the same time as the Nechepso–Petosiris literature, and are firmly rooted in earlier Egyptian traditions of pseudepigraphic letters and narratives of priests presenting wonders or divine wisdom at the pharaoh's court.¹⁶⁰

Thessalos, then, in his letter to the emperor and his narrative of a marvelous discovery, was not only attempting to supplement the wisdom of Nechepso by supplying the missing knowledge of the treatise; he was also writing himself into the role of Petosiris, the wise Egyptian priest who reveals astrological wisdom to the king. In one version of the medieval Latin translation, the conclusion of Thessalos' letter emphasizes the transmission of secret knowledge between himself and the emperor. Thessalos writes that he has passed on the god's revelation to no one but the emperor, and enjoins

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Kroll 1935: 2163. The references to gladiators need not exclude a date in the Hellenistic period; Antiochus IV (ruled 175–164 BCE) was said to have offered gladiatorial games and to have made them popular in Seleucid Asia (Livy 41.20).

¹⁵⁸ Cod. Berol. 170, fo. 10 (see *CCAG* VII, p. 43, pp. 161–62), cited and discussed briefly by Festugière 1950: 327, n. 1: "Having thus calculated exactly, you find the sign and the action of each star and you will discern what sort of star each one has, just as we have shown in the treatise on the planets, and, as we noted there, in what sign of the zodiac each stands. Next, I shall set out other uses of different matters, most powerful of men, Nechepso, king of kings, etc."

¹⁵⁹ Cod. Flor. Laur. 28, 34, fos. 64r–65r (*CCAG* I, p. 62); see also Kroll 1898: 124–25. Versions of this also appear in Cod. Rom. Angelicus 17, fo. 279 (*CCAG* V.1, p. 55), Cod. Paris. gr. 1991, fo. 65 (see *CCAG* VIII.1, p. 5), Cod. Paris. gr. 1405, fo. 81 (see *CCAG* VIII.3, p. 6) and Cod. Paris. gr. 2139, fo. 115 (see *CCAG* VIII.3, p. 12). The material discussed in this excerpt is similar to the content of Riess, fr. 20 = Vett. Val. 5.4.1–3.

¹⁶⁰ Festugière 1950: 324–31. Examples from the *PGM* corpus are the letters from Nephotes to Psammetichus (IV.154–285), from Pitys to King Ostanes (IV.2006–2138), and from the sacred scribe (ἱερογραμματεὺς) Thphes to king Ochos (XIII.957–59). Gordon 1997: 75 also explores the letter of the sacred scribe Pnouthis to Keryx as part of the "imagined world" of the late Egyptian priestly composers and users of the Greek magical papyri. See also the parallels gathered in Smith 1978: 174 n. 14. In a comprehensive analysis, Dieleman 2005: 185–284 has persuasively demonstrated that despite certain features shared with a wider Hellenistic discourse on magical wisdom, these letter motifs and the "mystifying motifs" of the *PGM* spells more generally were developed in the Hellenistic period by Egyptian priests on the basis of existing Egyptian traditions. On epistolary fiction as a development in Demotic literature, note also Vittmann 1998: 70.

him to keep the treatise a secret and to hand it over to an heir only after death.¹⁶¹ Thessalos employed these conventions of the Egyptian astrological tradition, in order to create an authoritative identity, but in the process, the discourse of Nechepso and Petosiris, which had served to authenticate astrological knowledge through Egyptian patterns of representation and thereby incorporate it into Egyptian tradition, was put to quite another use, revalorizing “ancient Egyptian wisdom” in the context of another pattern of representation governed by other interests and motivations. The appropriative dimension of Thessalos’ strategy is especially apparent in the partial displacement of king Nechepso from the structure of the literary trope and his replacement by the Roman emperor: a new king is at the head of the tradition, and his new sage will seek favor in the economy of his court.

To explore further how Thessalos appropriates an Egyptian priestly identity and turns it to advantage in the Roman imperial context, we must now turn from the literary conventions he emulates to the narrative of his quest for wisdom.

THESSALOS’ MAGICAL INITIATION INTO THE EGYPTIAN PRIESTHOOD

Direct access to the divine is fundamental to Thessalos’ appropriation of the Nechepso–Petosiris literature. Through his divine vision of Asclepius, he succeeds in completing the royal wisdom of Nechepso and placing himself, in literary terms at least, at the court of the Roman emperor as a wise Petosiris, a revealer of magical wisdom to the king. The direct encounter with the divine is also fundamental to the way in which Thessalos creates status for himself through the narrative of his quest for wisdom, since the elaborate process through which he gains his magical knowledge – finding a wise Egyptian priest, gaining his acquaintance, and eventually persuading him to produce a revelation for him in a purified chamber – is portrayed

¹⁶¹ Cod. Pal. Lat. 1277 §20: *volens observare praecepta dei scilicet id quod mihi traditum fuit ab ipso, et non dedi alicui mortali nisi tibi. ergo scriptum hoc quod tu probaveris divina virtute ipsarum in opere ipsarum medicinarum. sit tibi cura observare praecepta dei scilicet ut non tradas istud opus alicui donec vixeris, sed tene secretum et uni tui post mortem.* See Sconocchia 1984: 144. Compare this injunction to PGM I.42–195, a spell in the form of a letter written by the temple scribe Pnouthis to Keryx, at the end of which he urges secrecy: ταῦτα οὖν μηδενὶ παραδίδου εἰ μὴ μόνῳ [σο]υ Ἰαχινῶ υἱῶ σου ἀξιοῦντι τὰ [πὰρ] ἡμῶν ῥηθέντα ἐνεργ[ή]ματα “Therefore share these things with no one except [your] legitimate son alone when he asks you for the magic powers imparted [by] us” (trans. E. N. O’Neil in Betz 1992: 8).

as a sort of initiation into magical secrets.¹⁶² The pattern is similar in some respects to other Greek and Latin narratives, earnest or comical, about the quest for magical knowledge.¹⁶³ Thessalos' account, like Lucian's story of the sorcerer Panchrates (*Philopseudes* 34–36), could be understood as a *rite de passage* that effects Thessalos' transformation into a powerful magician.¹⁶⁴ But Thessalos' narrative, I shall argue, refers to a more specific Egyptian context, since entering sacred space and encountering the image of the god constituted the primary features of Egyptian priestly initiation. Though the divination rite through which Thessalos gained his vision of Asclepius was not in itself an initiation, Thessalos, in the course of telling his tale, transformed the value of the rite, showing how he assumed the prerogative of direct access to the divine and thereby gained the status, power, and authentic esoteric knowledge of an Egyptian priest.

The first part of Thessalos' quest in search of the magical wisdom that would overcome his failures with Nechepso's treatise consisted of a long journey "up-country," to the heart of ancient Egyptian wisdom. In the passage from Alexandria to Thebes, Thessalos evokes a geography of cultural authenticity. He describes Thebes as "the oldest city of Egypt, containing many temples" and observes that "there were scholarly high priests there and <elders> adorned with subtle learning."¹⁶⁵ Thebes at the time Thessalos would have visited had long ago lost its political and economic significance, and even its activities as the great cult center of Amun had declined. Amidst the monumental signs of past glories, however, temples continued to function, and priests continued to cultivate their religious and intellectual traditions.¹⁶⁶ Strabo, who visited Thebes in the first few years of Roman rule, remarked that the priests there were said to be philosophers and astronomers.¹⁶⁷ In the Graeco-Roman world, Thebes had a reputation as a center of Egyptian learning, and it served as an

¹⁶² Smith 1978: 185 n. 58 mentions but omits discussion of "the initiatory scenario of Thessalos twice being brought to the point of death in the narrative, especially during his complex and dramatic interview with the aged priest."

¹⁶³ Examples of this sort of tale are found in Plut. *Mor.* 410A–B, 421A–B; Justin *Dialogue with Trypho* 1–8; Harpocration *Cyranides* – prologue ll. 30–68, Kaimakis 1976: 15–17; more comical versions are found in Lucian *Nec.*, (Ps.)-Lucian *Onos*, and Apul. *Met.* For parallels to the spiritual quest in search of the alien wisdom of Egypt, see the Ps.-Clementine *Recognitions*, and Lucian *Philops.* 34–36.

¹⁶⁴ See F. Graf's brief discussion of the Pankrates story (1994: 161). ¹⁶⁵ Thessalos, *prooem.* 12.

¹⁶⁶ For a brief overview of the history and topography of Thebes in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, see Vandorpe 1995. The high priesthood of Amun continued until ca. 180 CE (see Quaegebeur 1974: 43–44), and building and religious activity continued at other temples into the Roman period, though on a relatively modest scale (see Vandorpe 1995: 208–28; Quaegebeur 1974).

¹⁶⁷ Strabo 17.1.46.

evocative setting in which to acquire ancient wisdom, but it need not be considered pure fantasy, since Thessalos' account of his time there includes a few details that give it a measure of verisimilitude.

The very goal of obtaining a revelation from Asclepius at Thebes would have been entirely possible in the Roman period. Among the temples and sanctuaries that still functioned was a joint shrine of Amenhotep son of Hapy together with his colleague Imhotep (known in Greek as Asclepius), who was originally from Memphis. The shrine had been built as a renovation of the inner sanctuary of the old temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri on the West Bank of Thebes in the reign of Ptolemy VIII (145–116 BCE).¹⁶⁸ Hundreds of Greek and Demotic graffiti left by visitors at the sanctuary show that it was particularly active in the first and second centuries CE.¹⁶⁹ Though many of those who left their marks were from the Theban region, some did come from afar, and there were even three doctors who came to visit the god, just as Thessalos says he did.¹⁷⁰ The pilgrims sought healing for the most part, which Imhotep provided through dream oracles or visions during temple incubation, but a hieroglyphic text in the sanctuary also alludes to the astronomical knowledge sometimes attributed to Imhotep, referring to him as the “living god who created the year for the stars” (*nṯr ʿnhy ms rnp.t n sbi.w*).¹⁷¹ At the same time as the shrine at Deir el-Bahri was renovated, a small temple, now known as the Qasr el-Aguz, was built to the southeast of Medinet Habu for Thoth, Imhotep, and Amenhotep son of Hapy. The combination of Imhotep with Thoth

¹⁶⁸ The cult of Amenhotep son of Hapy had been introduced to Deir el-Bahri in the third century BCE and Imhotep joined him later, either in the first half of the second century BCE or during the renovations in the reign of Ptolemy VIII. For an overview of the history of the cult of Imhotep and Amenhotep at Deir el-Bahri, see Łajtar 2006: 16–37.

¹⁶⁹ Łajtar 2006: 36. The Demotic texts are not yet published and many of those appear to date to the Ptolemaic period. For a preliminary discussion and the publication of one important early Demotic graffito dated to 304 BCE, see Karkowski, Winnicki, and Bresciani 1983: 101–5.

¹⁷⁰ Łajtar 2006: 80–86. Two of the doctors have Greek names, and one has an Egyptian name: Zoilos, Asklepiades, and Psentachnumis (Łajtar 2006: nos. 25, 94, and 165). Among the more important visitors was the *stratēgos* Celer (Łajtar 2006: 57–58, 84–86, no. 199), who visited in 123 CE and also left some verses on the colossus of Memnon. Thebes seems to have been a popular tourist destination for doctors in general. Aside from those who visited the Imhotep–Asclepius temple at Deir el-Bahri, at least twenty-six other doctors are attested in Ptolemaic and Roman period inscriptions in Thebes (Samama 2003: 484–98, nos. 411–40). Almost all of them are found in the graffiti in the tombs of the Valley of the Kings (the one exception is from the temple of Amun at Luxor and dates to the fourth century CE – Samama 2003: no. 415).

¹⁷¹ Łajtar 2006: 50–61. The text referring to Imhotep's astronomical knowledge is on the false door within the sanctuary. See Laskowska-Kusztal 1984: 34, no. 26. In a Roman-period inscription from the Hathor temple at Dendera, Imhotep is “he who makes known the course of the stars” (*srhy nmt.t n hbs.w*); see Wildung 1977: 139, § 94, pl. XXII. A depiction of Imhotep at the birth house at Isis temple at Philae is surrounded by representations of the decans (Wildung 1977: 169–70, §119, pl. xxxviii.2).

(the Egyptian Hermes) in this Theban shrine recalls the authorities of the Salt horoscope papyrus discussed earlier, a text that was probably written by an astrologer working in Upper Egypt.¹⁷²

Imhotep could also be found in other Theban temples in the early Roman period. On the northern side of the enclosure at Karnak, the god appeared in inscriptions and relief sculptures on the temple of his father, Ptah. A wooden shrine or "contra-temple" had been built onto the rear wall of the main *naos* of the temple in the Ptolemaic period, in order to provide a focal point for popular, non-priestly access to the divine. The reliefs carved into the temple wall show that Imhotep was worshiped there along with Ptah, Hathor, and Amenhotep, son of Hapy.¹⁷³ This type of structure could have been what Thessalos meant by the "chamber" or "house" (οἶκος) in which he claims to have received his revelation, but it is difficult to identify any particular location, since Imhotep could also be found at Deir el-Bahri and the small temple of Thoth mentioned above (Qasr el-'Aguz), as well as the Ptolemaic-period temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medineh, and the great Amun temple at Karnak.¹⁷⁴ In most of these Theban locations, Imhotep was given an epithet that suggests his role as a god of apparitions and revelations. He was called "wonderful manifestation of the gods" (*b3.t n.t s3.w-n.sn*), a phrase which appears to be particular to his worship in Thebes.¹⁷⁵ His oracular nature, however, was celebrated elsewhere, as in the second-century CE aretology of Imhotep-Asclepius in *P.Oxy.* 1381. The mention of a throne in Thessalos' account also accords with the god's typical iconography as a seated scribe with a papyrus scroll unrolled on his lap.¹⁷⁶ Even a casual visitor, such as one of the many Greek and Roman tourists attracted by the colossi of Memnon or the tombs in the

¹⁷² Wildung 1977: 236–39; § 151.2; Arnold 1999: 198, 200; Łajtar 2006: 15. As noted above, the astrologer cites works of "the Chaldaeans and Petosiris, and especially king Necheus" who in turn derived their knowledge "from our lord Hermes and Asklepios, who is Imouthes son of Hephaistos." Ryholt (forthcoming a) has argued that the Hermes of the Salt horoscope papyrus is to be equated with Amenhotep son of Hapy. If Ryholt's suggestion is accepted, the pair in the Salt papyrus would be equivalent to Amenhotep son of Hapy and Imhotep, who shared both Qasr el 'Aguz and the shrine at Deir el-Bahri.

¹⁷³ Wildung 1977: 189–91, §§ 131–32; 201–9, §§ 142–143.1. The addition of gates under Tiberius show that the Ptah temple continued to function into the Roman period. On forms of popular access to the temples in Thebes, see Brand 2007: 59–65, 70–78.

¹⁷⁴ Wildung 1977: 211–16, § 144–45; 217–18, § 146.1; 236–39, § 151.2. Kákosy 2003 also notes the presence of Imhotep at Deir el-Bahri and at Karnak in his brief discussion of Thessalos' visit to Thebes.

¹⁷⁵ Wildung 1977: 202, 215, 218, 226.

¹⁷⁶ For discussion of *P.Oxy.* 1381, see Wildung 1977: 93–98 and Fowden 1986: 50–52. A small first century CE statue, probably from Karnak and now in the Allard Pierson Museum (7876), shows Imhotep as a seated figure holding an unrolled papyrus on his lap (Wildung 1977: 195–96, § 139, pls. XLVII–XLVIII). Hundreds of bronze figures of Imhotep from Memphis and Saqqara show him

Valley of the Kings, could discover these basic facets of the god Imhotep's presence in Thebes.¹⁷⁷

The method by which the Egyptian priest is supposed to have summoned Imhotep–Asclepius for Thessalos is somewhat unclear, since lekanomancy is mentioned first, but the revelation itself is described as though a face-to-face interview with an enthroned god. Lekanomancy, also called *šn hn* or “vessel inquiry” in Demotic, was practiced by members of the Egyptian priestly class in Roman-period Egypt, to judge by the number of such rituals preserved in the Demotic and Greek magical papyri.¹⁷⁸ These are part of a broader category of divination rites, known by the term “god's arrival” (*ph-ntr*), that formed a well-defined sphere of traditional priestly activity, and could also embrace the more spectacular vision of Imhotep–Asclepius.¹⁷⁹ Though not the only ancient city where Egyptian magical traditions were preserved, Thebes does appear to have been an important center in this regard. The Anastasi papyri, a library of manuscripts which are Theban in origin, included a large part of the ritual materials now known as the Greek and Demotic magical papyri as well as two alchemical texts.¹⁸⁰ Two bilingual manuscripts from this magical library, *P.Leiden I 384* and *P.London–Leiden*, are particularly important, since they were most

in this position (Wildung 1977: 47), and this was a common way of depicting the god in various other media and contexts (Wildung 1977: §§ 51–52, 55, 85, 92, 94, 116, 146.1).

¹⁷⁷ Strabo pays particular attention to these two sites in his account of Thebes (17.1.46) and numerous graffiti attest to the fact that these were popular tourist destinations (see Bernard and Bernard 1960 and Baillet 1926). On Strabo's travels and his account in general, see Yoyotte, Charvet, and Gompertz 1997.

¹⁷⁸ The Demotic *šn hn* spells: *PDM* xiv.1–92; 239–95; 295–308; 395–427; 528–53; 627–35; 670–74; 695–700; 805–40; 841–50; 851–55; 1110–29. See also *PGM* IV.154–285 and LXII.24–26 for Greek examples.

¹⁷⁹ See Ritner 1993: 219–20, and 1995: 3356–58. The *ph-ntr* was a type of ritual which from the New Kingdom onward consisted of an oracular petition to a divine image. This was a normal religious method of making decisions and seeking the help or advice of a divinity in Egyptian religion. The term appears as follows: *PDM* xiv.117 (5/1), 145 (5/29), 170 (6/20), 176 (6/26), 232 (8/12), 828 (27/24), 833 (27/29), 836 (27/32); *PDM* Suppl. 130, 149, 168. Numbers in parentheses refer to column and line number of *PDM* xiv as published in Griffith and Thompson 1905; see also Johnson 1977, the original publication of the text appearing in Betz 1992 as *PDM* Suppl. A number of the Greek spells that invoke divinities for oracular purposes (e.g. *PGM* IV.930–1114) would also, from an Egyptian perspective, be considered part of this category.

¹⁸⁰ The following texts (according to Brashear 1995: 3402–4 and Fowden 1986: 168–70) belong to the Theban magical library: *PGM* IV, *PGM* V, *PGM* Va, *PGM* XII/*PDM* xii, *PGM* XIII, *PGM* XIV/*PDM* xiv, *P.Leid.* X 397, and *P.Holm*. The following are possible additions to the library: *PGM* I, *PGM* II, *PGM* III, *PGM* VII, *PGM* LXI/*PDM* lxi, and *PDM* Suppl. On these texts and their Egyptian priestly context, see Dieleman 2005, Tait 1995, and Fowden 1986: 168–76. Johnson 1976 concluded on the basis of Demotic orthography and morphology and the dialect of Coptic glosses that *P.London–Leiden* (*PDM* xiv) was indeed written in the Theban area. Fowden 1986: 173, 186–95 viewed these materials along with the Nag Hamadi *Hermetica* as part of an Upper Egyptian socio-intellectual milieu in which Hermetism thrived.

likely composed in Thebes in the period approximately contemporary with Thessalos' treatise.¹⁸¹ These two compilations of spells contain the majority of the evidence for the "god's arrival" (*ph-ntr*) and "vessel inquiry" (*šn hn*) rituals just mentioned. One of the spells in *P.London-Leiden* is even attributed to Imhotep: a *ph-ntr* used in the process of casting an astrological chart to determine whether the stars are in favor of an undertaking.¹⁸² Such contemporary magical practice provides circumstantial evidence that Thessalos, traveling to Thebes in the late first or early second century CE, could well have found the type of magical and astrological revelation he describes.

These details give a tantalizing sense of reality to the story – as they were intended to do – but even more important to the aims of Thessalos' narrative is the portrayal of his interactions with the Theban priests, and in particular the old sage who finally provides his revelation. When Thessalos reached Thebes, after a long journey to the ancient seat of Egyptian learning, his difficulties were far from over. He befriended the Theban priests, and as he gained their trust, he made inquiries concerning the magical knowledge that he sought. The answers that most of them gave did not impress. Thessalos writes, "I despised the majority of them for making professions equal to my own rashness."¹⁸³ Theban priests were apparently liable to make promises just as hasty as those Thessalos himself had made when trying out the remedies of Nechepso in Alexandria.¹⁸⁴ Perhaps this

¹⁸¹ These texts are also known as *PGM XII/PDM xii* and *PGM XIV/PDM xiv*. Dieleman 2005: 40–44, in the most comprehensive study of these texts to date, has carefully reviewed the papyri themselves and previous studies and confirmed that these manuscripts were indeed from Thebes. He has also, however, revised the dates usually given for these texts. He suggests that they were copied in the late second or early third century CE, but that their composition may be dated to the end of the first or beginning of the second century CE.

¹⁸² *PDM* xiv.93–114. See also *PDM Suppl.* 168–84 (dated to the third century CE), a *ph-ntr* used to consult Imhotep himself, in which instructions are given to perform the rite when the moon is in Leo, Sagittarius, Aquarius, or Virgo.

¹⁸³ The text at this point has proved difficult to interpret. Prooem. 13 (according to the edition of Friedrich 1968): προβαίνοντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου καὶ τῆς πρὸς αὐτοὺς μοι φιλίας μᾶλλον αὐξανομένης, ἐπισυθανόμην, εἴ τι τῆς μαγικῆς ἐνεργείας σῶζεται. καὶ τῶν μὲν πλειόνων ἐπαγγελίας ὁμοίας τῇ προπετείᾳ μου (ἐπι)φερόντων κατέγνων. I have translated the last part "And I despised the majority of them for making professions equal to my own rashness." This omits the emendation provided by Cumont 1918: 92. Festugière 1939: 60 translated the phrase ἐπαγγελίας ὁμοίας τῇ προπετείᾳ μου φερόντων κατέγνων as "s'indignaient de ma témérité à concevoir de telles espérances" considering the construction a variant of φέρειν with an adverb (χαλεπῶς, e.g.) and the dative case. Cf. *LSJ* s.v. φέρω III.2. Cumont *loc. cit.* favored the restoration (ἐπι)φερόντων, and translated "reprochent." In my previous studies of Thessalos (2003a, 2003b) I followed Cumont and Festugière, and later scholars who took up their views, but I am now convinced that the more straightforward interpretation is the one given above.

¹⁸⁴ The words ἐπαγγελίας and προπετεία echo his earlier description of his "rash promise" to his parents in I prooem. 8 (προπετέστερον τῇ γραφῇ πεπιστευκῶς ἔγραψα περὶ τῆς ἐνεργείας

reflected the realities of tourism in Thebes: Egyptian priests providing information (of various kinds) to curious Greeks and Romans who wanted magical marvels beyond what they had seen at the “singing” colossus of Memnon. Thessalos, however, made distinctions. He shows that he is an arbiter of authentic Egyptian knowledge. Stung by his misadventures with the Nechepso treatise, he developed some discrimination, some connoisseurship. In his dismissal of the majority of the Theban priests, Thessalos reintroduces himself as a reliable knowledge-broker, and shows that he is not at the mercy of potential charlatans. Thessalos was capable of finding the one older and more serious high priest who had an authentic knowledge of magic.

In this story, authenticity goes hand in hand with secrecy. As soon as Thessalos has identified the bearer of true magical knowledge, secrecy, and his infiltration of that secrecy permeate the narrative. Before he made his request, he entreated the priest to walk with him in the most deserted parts of the city without revealing what he desired, and they went to a sacred precinct that was “surrounded by the deepest silence.”¹⁸⁵ They were far from the inhabited areas of Thebes, and far from the other priests. What transpired there was secret. Thessalos abased himself before the priest with a desperate plea for a divine revelation, but he also manipulated and deceived the priest, in order to get more than he was apparently willing to concede. He did not reveal his real desire to speak one on one, alone with the god Imhotep-Asclepius, until the last moment, and the priest’s reluctance was evident in his expression. In effect, Thessalos demanded direct, unmediated contact with the god, and managed to cut the priest out of the secret revelation he hoped to attain. Thessalos entered the pure chamber by himself, and without the priest’s knowledge he had concealed papyrus and ink on his person so that he could write down what the god would say.¹⁸⁶ At the end of the revelation, which is only preserved in the modified Greek versions and Latin translations, the god himself concludes his discussion by urging Thessalos not to hand over the wisdom of the treatise to the ignorant multitudes, but to keep it secret.¹⁸⁷

αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς γονεῦσιν ὥς ἤδη πειράσας καὶ ὑποστρέφειν ἐπηγγελόμην) and 10 (προπετοῦς ἐπαγγελίας). The word ἐπαγγελία is also used for the marvelous promises of the Nechepso treatise in I prooem. 6.

¹⁸⁵ εἰς τι ἄλσος ἡσυχία βαθυτάτη περιεχόμενον (I prooem. 16). ¹⁸⁶ I prooem. 17–23.

¹⁸⁷ See Thessalos II, epil. 2–5, BH (Cod. Par. gr. 2502 and Cod. Vindob. med. gr. 23; Friedrich 1968: 263): ἐν σοὶ ἰοῦν· τὸ λειπομένον ἐστὶν κατασκευάζειν τε τὰ προγεγραμμένα καὶ τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ λόγον φυλάσσειν, ὥστε· ἀνθρώπων μηδενὶ ἀμαθεὶ παραδιδόναι τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην. ἔλθοῦσα γὰρ εἰς πλείονων χεῖρας αὕτη ἢ βίβλος τὸ φιλόλογον καὶ θαυμαστόν τῆς καθόλου, ἱατρικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐπιτεῦγμα περικόψει . . . παραινῶ δέ σοι ἐν ἀπορρήτοις ἔχειν τὴν γραφὴν

The secrecy that Thessalos weaves into the story is, at the most general level, intended to enhance the reader's estimation of both Thessalos and his treatise. Secrecy, as a social strategy, Georg Simmel observed, can endow virtually any content with value, since it creates a sense of exclusive ownership for the possessor, and raises barriers to acquisition for those who may desire to possess it.¹⁸⁸ But Thessalos' secrecy is not just an application of general sociological observations. It also derives its power to create value from its function in the particular social and cultural context in which his narrative unfolds. Secrecy had long been central to Egyptian religion, shrouding the priestly knowledge required for religious practice. Along with ritual purity and ethical qualities, it distinguished Egyptian priests as a social group. Some have suggested that in the Roman period, the secrecy surrounding the activities of Thessalos and the priest may have been intended to hide illicit magic from official scrutiny,¹⁸⁹ but despite progressive economic and social restrictions on the Egyptian priesthood, there is little evidence of specific efforts to control magical practices or divination in Egypt.¹⁹⁰ Without excluding the possibility that Roman interference may, in some respects, have intensified an existing tendency toward secrecy and esotericism among Egyptian priests, it will be more productive to examine how

ταύτην . . . "It is in your power to prepare and to guard both what was written previously and the account you have received from me, so that you hand over this writing to no unlearned man. For if this book comes into the hands of the multitude, the learned and marvelous attainment of medical knowledge will be cut down . . . I exhort you to keep this writing secret." The Latin translations offer similar statements (see Friedrich 1968: 264–66 and Sconocchia 1984: 141–43).

¹⁸⁸ Simmel 1950: 332: "Not quite so evident are the attractions and values of the secret beyond its significance as a mere means – the peculiar attraction of formally secretive behavior irrespective of its momentary content. In the first place, the strongly emphasized exclusion of all outsiders makes for a correspondingly strong feeling of possession. For many individuals, property does not fully gain its significance with mere ownership, but only with the consciousness that others must do without it. The basis for this, evidently, is the impressionability of our feelings through *differences*. Moreover, since the others are excluded from the possession – particularly when it is very valuable – the converse suggests itself psychologically, namely, that what is denied to many must have special value." This understanding of the value of the secret as a subjective, non-essential judgment is not unrelated to Simmel's observation on the nature of value in *The Philosophy of Money* (Simmel 1978: 67): "Objects are not difficult to acquire because they are valuable, but we call those objects valuable that resist our desire to possess them." The consequences of Thessalos' discursive strategies for the value of the Egyptian wisdom he offers to the emperor will be discussed further below.

¹⁸⁹ Graux 1878: 67–68; Cumont 1918: 92; Festugière 1939: 60, n. 16; Ritner 1995: 3355–56; Gordon 1997: 80.

¹⁹⁰ In 198/9 CE, Q. Aemilius Saturninus issued a prohibition of several native Egyptian forms of divination, which is preserved in *P.Coll. Youtie* 1.30; see Parássoglou 1976 and Rea 1977. The prohibition was probably meant temporarily to curb potentially subversive consultations during the imperial visit of Septimius Severus. The continued efficacy of such decrees is not beyond doubt, and the prohibited practices seem to have continued after this legislation. See Frankfurter 1998: 153–97.

Thessalos manipulated this Egyptian secrecy to enhance his own status and that of his treatise.¹⁹¹

Greek and Latin authors of the late Ptolemaic period and the Roman period knew and wrote about the secrecy of Egyptian priests,¹⁹² and these impressions, however stereotyped, did reflect important aspects of contemporary Egyptian practice. The Greek magical papyri, including the texts of the Theban magical library, are filled with commands to keep spells secret because of their divine character. Though a mixture of elements from heterogeneous cultural traditions, the spells were, as mentioned earlier, used, copied, circulated, and composed by Egyptian priests. In this milieu, antecedents for the injunctions to secrecy could be found in magical and medical texts from earlier periods.¹⁹³ Orders to keep the spells secret are surprisingly absent from the Demotic magical spells, but the language and script themselves were capable – certainly by the Roman period – of excluding non-priests. The scribe or scribes of the London–Leiden Demotic magical papyri also used the hieratic script, and in some cases an Egyptian cipher script, a measure perhaps intended to restrict knowledge of the spells even among those capable of reading Demotic.¹⁹⁴ There are also elements of secrecy in the ritual instructions: certain substances are to be kept hidden, a divination rite is to be performed in secret.¹⁹⁵ But secrecy and secret knowledge cannot be associated with “magic” as an illicit category separate from religion, since Egyptian magic (*ḥk3*) was not understood in such terms,¹⁹⁶ and secrecy played a central role in the normal, socially and politically sanctioned religion of Egyptian temples and other privileged ritual contexts such as funerary cult. Drawing especially on New Kingdom funerary texts and solar cult hymns, Jan Assmann has shown that secret knowledge was required of Egyptian priests in order for them, through a *unio liturgica*, to take on divine roles and to interact correctly

¹⁹¹ Explaining the secrecy of the Thessalos narrative against the background of Egyptian priestly secrecy was proposed by Ritner 1993: 219, n. 1021; 1995: 3357.

¹⁹² See, e.g., Diod. Sic. 1.27; Strabo 17.1.29; Luc. 10.194–201; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 5.7.41. The injunctions to secrecy that protected an Egyptian sanctuary were also sometimes found in the Greek world. See e.g. Paus. 10.32.17 on the sanctuary of Isis at Tithorea. For a discussion of the discourse of curiosity and secrecy in Greek literature on Egypt as a possible reflection of an actual cultural confrontation, see Assmann 2005.

¹⁹³ On secrecy in the Greek magical papyri, see Betz 1995, though he downplays the Egyptian background. For the latter, see Dieleman 2005: 82–83, 276, who discusses such parallels as *Book of the Dead* spells 137A, 147, 148, 156, 161, 190; *P.Ebers* 206b; *P.Salt* 825 1/1–2 and 5/10–6/3 (for another reference to secrecy in this Saïte period text, see below, pp. 257 and n. 198).

¹⁹⁴ Dieleman 2005: 80–98. See also Ritner 1995: 3356 and Johnson 1992: lv.

¹⁹⁵ *PDM* xiv. 142–45 (5/26–29), 346 (12/12), 365 (12/31), 481 (16/23), 705 (23/31), 830 (27/26), 833 (27/29). See Dieleman 2005: 276.

¹⁹⁶ See above, n. 52.

with the gods in the course of ritual performances. Secrecy was understood as necessary to protect and to preserve knowledge that was vital to the ritual maintenance of the cosmic order.¹⁹⁷

In the later periods of Egyptian history, this religious imperative to secrecy continued to bar non-priests from sacred knowledge, and also from sacred rites and the temples in which they took place. A number of texts preserved on papyrus or inscribed on temple walls convey the secrecy and exclusivity required of Egyptian priests. At times, this secrecy specifically targets foreigners as an out-group, a social fact that was probably not lost on visitors and immigrants to Egypt. A hieroglyphic and hieratic ritual papyrus from the Saïte period contains a passage describing the temple scriptorium or "House of Life," as a place that must remain secret and closed to outsiders: "An Asiatic [a general term for foreigners from the East] must not enter it; he must not see it."¹⁹⁸ The postscript to the "Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys," part of the rites of Osiris preserved in a second-century BCE hieratic papyrus, requires that the recitation be secluded and not heard or seen by anyone but priests.¹⁹⁹ General injunctions to secrecy were inscribed on the doorposts of passages through which priests would enter the Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu (begun 237 BCE and completed 70 BCE): "Do not reveal anything you see in the temple which is secret" and, "Be discreet at the appearance in his sacred throne; do not go out with what you have seen."²⁰⁰ A similar instruction is found at a doorway through which offerings were brought into the Ptolemaic temple of Sobek and Horus at Kom Ombo, begun under Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE) and completed in the Roman period.²⁰¹ A text from one of the crypts of the Ptolemaic- and Roman-period temple of Hathor at Dendera reads, "No Phoenician should approach it, no Greek enter it, no Bedouin

¹⁹⁷ Assmann 1995.

¹⁹⁸ *P.Salt* 825 (B.M. 10090 + 10051) 6/5; *nn ʿk ʿm r=f nn mš=f sw*; Derchain 1965: 140, 168 (for the revised palaeographical dating of the papyrus, see Verhoeven 2001: 280–88). In regard to this injunction to secrecy, it is relevant to note that the downfall of Setne Khamwas in the tale of Setne and Naneferkaptah begins just after the phrase "It transpired that Setne had no occupation on earth except to spread out the scroll (of Thoth) and read aloud from it before everyone" (Setne I 4/38; translation Ritner in Simpson et al. 2003: 463).

¹⁹⁹ *P.Berlin* 3008. The text was appended to a copy of the *Book of the Dead* belonging to a woman, and was apparently adapted for funerary use. For an English translation, see Lichtheim 1980: 116–21.

²⁰⁰ The former text is among the general injunctions on the south doorpost of the eastern entrance to the pronaos (Chassinat 1928: 360.12–362.4; Alliot 1949–54: 185); and the latter is among the texts on the north doorpost of the southeastern entrance to the courtyard (Chassinat 1930: 343.13–344.11). For translations of both texts, see Kurth 1994: 148, 151. These and other examples are noted in Ritner 1993: 203–4.

²⁰¹ See Gutbub 1973: 144–84, esp. 150, 164–65.

tread it, its magic (*hk*) should not be seen within it.”²⁰² This and other contemporary expressions of the same sentiment provide the best cultural and historical explanation for the old Egyptian priest’s reluctance to provide a direct revelation to the Greek doctor Thessalos when he specifically asked to “converse” or “associate” one on one with the god (μόνῳ μοι πρὸς μόνον ὁμιλεῖν – I. prooem. 22). It derived from traditional religious restrictions on secret knowledge, sacred space, and interacting with manifestations of the divinity.²⁰³

These restrictions were vital in religious terms, but also in social terms, since they fundamentally defined the identity of Egyptian priests. The content of priestly secrets and the motives for protecting them were religious in nature, but the structure of religious secrecy, its inclusions and exclusions, also contributed to the articulation of social categories and status hierarchies in Egyptian society. Just as secrecy can create value for the content it conceals, it can also adorn the possessor of the secret, or the group who shares it, with social prestige, especially in those contexts in which secrecy is not opposed to the social and political order but integrated into it, as was the case in Egyptian society.²⁰⁴ The restrictions discussed above must be seen in this light, since, in traditional Egyptian practice, the day of the priest’s first entrance to the secret, interior shrine of the temple, and the privilege of access to the divine image which that act created, constituted

²⁰² Chassinat 1952: 60/10–61/2. See also *ibid.* 54, lines 6–8, and 97, l. 4.

²⁰³ Assmann 1992: 11 remarks that Late Period Egyptian temples differ from earlier ones in the box principle of their design. At Edfu, for example, five concentric walls and intervening zones protect the inner sanctuary from the outside world. The traditional idea of unapproachability and secretness was perhaps exacerbated in later periods by a “Profanationsangst” (see also Assmann 2002: 393–96). A text of interest for the exclusion of outsiders from Egyptian temples is the lengthy Greek graffito of Athenodoros at the shrine of Imhotep and Amenhotep at Deir el-Bahri (Łajtar 2006: no. 208). According to the interpretation of Łajtar 2006: 60, 296, Athenodoros visited the shrine in the second century CE and while consulting the oracle, he heard Amenhotep speaking to him. Out of curiosity, he opened the door to the inner sanctum, entered, and stood before the god’s image. For this transgression, he was punished with an illness, but subsequently restored to health by the gods of the sanctuary. If Łajtar’s view is correct, this is interesting evidence of a foreigner interacting with the restrictions of Egyptian sacred space. The text, however, is extremely fragmentary, and difficult to interpret with absolute certainty.

²⁰⁴ For secrecy as an adornment, see Simmel 1950: 337–38. In considering the role of secrecy in the formation of social structures, Simmel focuses much more on “secret societies” that are generally separate from or even opposed to the dominant social order (Simmel 1950: 345–76), rather than on those societies in which secrecy is part of the normal social order and articulates its social relations. An enlightening examination of such a situation is the account of Poro secret societies in Liberia by Bellman 1984. Assmann 1995 rightly stresses the centrality of secrecy to Egyptian religious ideology, but in opposing it to the separatist “esoteric” secrecy of the later Greek initiate groups who took over Egyptian ideas, he neglects to acknowledge that secrecy created social hierarchies within Egyptian society. For an analysis that tends more in this direction, but focuses primarily on pharaonic Egypt, see Baines 1990.

an initiation into priestly status. The evidence for Egyptian initiations is thin and allusive, but a significant corpus of inscriptions set up by priests at Karnak to commemorate their "day of initiation" (*hrw n bs*) survives from the Third Intermediate Period (21st–23rd Dynasties, ranging in date from 983 BCE to as late as ca. 750 BCE).²⁰⁵ Entering sacred space and viewing the sacred image were the most significant elements of the rite. Crossing the boundary between the profane world and the inner sanctuary served also to cross the limit between human and divine worlds, owing to an equation between sacred space and the heavenly realm. This equation is made explicit in some of the testimonia which conclude the initiation texts.²⁰⁶ As Kruchten has shown in his extensive analysis of the uses of the verb *bsi* (literally "to enter") and substantives derived from it, this notion of ascent, or emergence from a lower level to a higher, is central to the basic meaning of the word.²⁰⁷

The use of the term *bs* in all its meanings is found in hieroglyphic inscriptions well into the Graeco-Roman period. At the Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, it is the *bs*-image upon which the god Horus settles, or with which he unites in his "shrine" or his "great palace."²⁰⁸ Access to this

²⁰⁵ The dates are given by Kruchten 1989: 239–43, who suggests that the absence of "textes d'introduction" later than the Third Intermediate period could be explained by a change in recording practice, rather than an institutional or religious change. The practice of recording these initiations may also relate to the historical conditions of the Third Intermediate period. The hereditary principle of the Egyptian priesthood familiar from Herodotus developed only late in Egyptian history (ca. 20th Dynasty). Moreover, with the advent of Libyan influence in the 22nd Dynasty, there was a great concern among the priesthood for defining the legitimacy of their priestly status through elaborate genealogical records. The records of the *hrw n bs* stem, no doubt, from the same impulse. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of continuity in the practice in the form of Demotic graffiti at Medinet Habu which record the initiation of priests. See Thissen 1989: 18–29 especially p. 21, n. 1.

²⁰⁶ The "god's-father" (*it-ntr*) Pa-di-Amun addresses those who will follow in his footsteps: "O you who will come after me and enter into Ipet-Sut (the temple of Karnak), that is the Ennead of the living (gods)" (Kruchten 1989: 28, fr. 1). The vizier Harsiese describes his introduction "into the great and venerable seat of Amun, which is the sky/heaven" (Kruchten 1989: 62, fr. 7). The initiation, therefore, is envisioned in decidedly vertical terms. The passage is from below to on high, a quality which is evident in the architecture of late sanctuaries such as the Ptolemaic temple of Horus at Edfu, where the floor level gradually rises along the primary axis as one approaches the inner *naos*.

²⁰⁷ The word is written phonetically and followed by a fish (Gardiner's sign-list (1957): K5) and walking legs determinative, perhaps representing a fish leaping or breaching the water's surface. Derived from this verb is the substantive *bs* which denotes the particular image of the god capable of crossing the boundary between earth and the realm of the gods. The term could be qualified by *sstb* or *qlsr* to indicate its "secret" and "holy" nature, but on its own, the *bs*-image carried connotations of secrecy, and exclusivity. See Wilson 1997: 331. Heilen (forthcoming: 19–20) suggests that Nechepso's heavenly ascent and divine revelation in Riess fr. 1 (see above) may have been modeled in part on a ritual of initiation.

²⁰⁸ Several references in Wilson 1997: 331.

image was restricted to those who had been “initiated” into the appropriate status, through an introduction into its presence.²⁰⁹ Scenes of the pharaoh as priest entering (*bs*) the temple to perform worship in the presence of the god are found in many temple reliefs and inscriptions. These include, for example, a depiction of Alexander entering into the presence of Amun carved on the barque shrine at Luxor temple. The term is attested in its initiatory sense in the hieroglyphic portion of the trilingual Canopus decree of 238 BCE, where it denotes induction into office. In one case, it refers to the induction of the ruler,²¹⁰ but it was also used for the initiation of priests.²¹¹ At the temple of Dendera, priests are given the epithet “initiated into his duty/office” (*bs m ỉry.t.f*).²¹² In the inscription on a second-century BCE statue from the Karnak cachette, a father celebrates as a benefaction from the gods the fact that his son succeeded him: “It is good for me

²⁰⁹ There is even a pun on this association in Edfu VIII 145,5 (see Wilson 1997: 331–32).

²¹⁰ For the hieroglyphic text of the Canopus decree, see *Urk.* II.124–54 (the example cited is at line 23). See also commentary by Pfeiffer 2004. For bibliography on the barque shrine of Alexander at Luxor, see Porter and Moss 1972: 324–25.

²¹¹ Lines 14 and 34. Curiously, the term was not common in the Demotic script. At the relevant places in the Canopus decree, *bs* is replaced with a more prosaic turn of phrase in Demotic. E.g. at line 34 *bs-sn* “they were initiated” becomes *ỉr=w n wꜥb* “they became priests.” In one instance the relationship between initiation and the priestly prerogatives of entering the temple and performing rites there is made explicit. The decree proclaims the creation of a fifth phyle of priests in honor of Berenice, and the privileges to be accorded these priests, who “shall share . . . in every rite of entering (*bs*) in order to perform rites of purification in the temple” (Line 16). The Demotic version leaves out the term *bs*, and states only that the priests shall have a share in *nꜥ gy n tꜥb* “the rites of purification.” The Greek likewise only states μετέχειν δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς πέμπτης φυλῆς τῶν Εὐεργετῶν θεῶν τῶν ἁγναιῶν. For further discussion, see Daumas 1952: 173–74. The term *bs* does, however, occur in the *Book of Thoth* L01.5, 10/3 and L01, 1/18 (Jasnow and Zauzich 2005). See below. A tantalizing possibility exists in a suitable initiatory context at col. 1, l. 12 of the Demotic story of Setne Khamwas and Si-Osire (*P.British Museum* 604 verso), but the word transliterated as *bs* by Griffith 1900 is damaged, and the writing is uncertain in any case. A possible reference to a *bs*-image in a second-century CE papyrus (*P.Vind.* D. 6321) may refer to an image of the god Bes. See Reymond 1977: III–16. Another possible attestation (*P.Vind.* D. 6319 (also second century CE) – Reymond 1977: 66–67, 104) may fall into the same category.

²¹² Dendera I.42,9 (Cauville 1998: 70–71); X.13,4; X.268,13 (Cauville, Hallof, and Berg 1997: 13, 268). Note also Dendera I, pl. 64, d), which forbids the initiation (*bs*) of anyone who is not literate, discussed by Sauneron 1962. Another interesting set of inscriptions at Dendera is found in the workshop where divine images were created. According to these texts, apparently drawn from a manual of procedures for creating cult images, different stages of the work were completed in different areas, with the final acts of consecration to take place in the *Ḥ.t-nb*, “the House of Gold.” Though the text lists a number of craftsmen required for fashioning the physical forms of the statues, they are explicitly excluded from the “secret work” of the House of Gold, since they are uninitiated. Derchain 1990: 234 translates “En ce qui concerne le ‘Château de l’Or’ et la naissance des idoles *ḥmw* . . . il y a là: [there follows a list of craftsmen] en tout douze hommes en service mensuel, soit en tout 48 hommes. Ils ne sont pas initiés (*bs*) auprès du dieu. Ce sont eux qui font venir au monde les statues (*šḥmw*). Il (*nts* = le ‘Château de l’Or’) est inaccessible comme les statues de tout dieu qui se trouve dans le temple . . . Quand on en vient à l’Œuvre secret en toute chose, c’est l’affaire des initiés (*ỉwti*) initiés auprès du dieu, qui sont membres du clergé (*wnn m ḥmw ntr*).”

that he has been introduced before the god" (twṯ n(·i) bs-f ḥr ntr).²¹³ For the present discussion, it is particularly significant that this concept of priestly initiation was also associated with the acquisition of sacred wisdom in the Demotic *Book of Thoth*, a possible Egyptian antecedent to the Greek *Hermetica* which exists in first- and second-century CE copies, but which may have been composed in the Ptolemaic period or earlier. In this dialogic text, "He-who-loves-knowledge" (*mr-rḥ*), a priest or student who aspires to be a scribe, appears to undergo an initiation into the temple scriptorium through which he gains access to revealed knowledge.²¹⁴ All these attestations show that the term and the basic initiatory concept of entry into sacred or ritually exclusive space continued into the period of Thessalos' professed journey to Thebes, and his encounter with the priests there.

With Egyptian traditions of religious secrecy in mind, critical elements of the narrative can be recapitulated in a different light. Thessalos' difficulty in gaining access to the knowledge he desires, the secrecy that surrounds the process, and the old priest's reluctance are not simply general mystification motifs. These elements of the narrative also play on traditional Egyptian religious secrecy and the central prerogatives of priestly office. This evidence of a tendency towards secrecy supplies the necessary information to understand the reluctance of the Theban priest to grant Thessalos' request for a direct revelation. But the secrecy which surrounded Thessalos' supplication of this one priest was not exactly this traditional secrecy, nor (most likely) avoidance of Roman surveillance. Secrecy would be required to induce the old Egyptian priest to transgress a religious restriction and to provide a divine encounter for a non-priest and a foreigner. Thessalos and the priest would have had to be circumspect because of the potential disapproval of other priests.²¹⁵ Secrecy, as a social phenomenon, not only

²¹³ Cairo JE 37328 a,1 (Jansen-Winkeln 2001: 1.260, 2.438, pl. 86). The owner of the statue, Horkawy, belongs to the fifth phyle of priests, so he must have lived after the Canopus Decree of 238 BCE. Jansen-Winkeln 2001: 259–60 proposes a date in the second century BCE.

²¹⁴ Jasnow and Zauzich 2005: 54–77 (for attestations of the term *bs*, see *Book of Thoth*, LOr.5, 10/3 and LOr. 1/18). See also Quack 2007: 250–62 who disagrees with the emphasis on connections to the underworld proposed by the editors of the *Book of Thoth*, preferring to see the text as describing the process of a scribe's initiation into the House of Life or scriptorium, which is often referred to in the *Book of Thoth* as the "Chamber of Darkness."

²¹⁵ This is especially so if, as some scholars have suggested, the "pure house" in which Thessalos was enclosed by the priest was not a private dwelling or makeshift structure purified for the occasion, but rather a shrine or chamber in a temple. See, e.g., Frankfurter 1998: 168–69, 177 who suggests that the "pure house" may have been a temple alcove or some other room in a temple complex redesigned for dispensing oracles. In this case, the practice is perhaps not so unusual from the Egyptian point of view, though Thessalos still presents it as in some respects transgressive. The interpretation of the οἶκος, however, has been much disputed. See especially Smith 1978: 181–82,

governs the relations between those included and those excluded, it also (in principle) determines the reciprocal relations between the members of the group who share the secret and maintain discipline to protect it. In a text from the temple of Horus at Edfu that is associated with a ritual scene of the Offering of Maat (*Mḥ.t*), the evil-doer is contrasted with the one who acts justly, and the first descriptor of the evil-doer is “He who initiates (leads inside) wrongfully.”²¹⁶ This is, in effect, what Thessalos says that he induced the priest to do.

Thessalos’ narrative at several points draws attention to his transgression of normal restrictions regarding contact with the divine, and his infiltration of the Egyptian priest’s secretive domain. He not only tells how he circumvented the secrecy of the Egyptian priesthood by persuading a true Egyptian priest to assist him in his inquiries; he also claims that he hid on his person papyrus and pen to record the knowledge he hoped to gain (I prooem. 21); and at the last minute, he sprang a request for a direct encounter (I prooem. 22) with Imhotep–Asclepius on the apparently unsuspecting priest. Thessalos portrays the priest as visibly upset at this imposition (prooem. 23). The implicit reason for this is that the direct encounter with the god removes the mediating function of the priest, thereby gaining for Thessalos a quasi-priestly status. Thessalos’ move to circumvent the priest is perhaps intrusive and manipulative but he was, after all, telling the tale of his revelation experience with the intention of establishing his authority, and thereby adding value to his treatise on magico-medicinal uses of plants. This value derived not only from the status and cultural location of the Egyptian priest as a guardian of exotic eastern wisdom, but also from Thessalos’ claimed success in manipulating the priest in order to appropriate his status. From Thessalos’ perspective, this was the story of “how I went to great lengths to trick one of those notoriously tight-lipped Egyptian priests into initiating me into divine revelations normally reserved for that secretive priesthood – revelations which I can now pass on to you, the reader.”

Unfortunately, the Madrid manuscript²¹⁷ breaks off in the fourth chapter of the first book, so the results of the initiation process are not entirely

n. 43 and Ritner 1995: 3357. Even if a temporary structure, or pure house, is meant, it is clear from the later ritual practices preserved in the Greek and Demotic magical papyri that such structures, along with miniaturized cult statues, could function as equivalents to the sacred space of the temple, and create similar structures of inclusion and exclusion as are implied in Thessalos’ representation of his encounter with the priest. See, for example, Moyer 2003a and Moyer and Dieleman 2003.

²¹⁶ Edfu V.334.1–6. For discussion of the text and several parallels to this injunction against wrongful initiation, see Fairman 1958: 87, 90.

²¹⁷ Codex Matritensis Bibl. nat. 4631 (T).

certain. Thessalos' narrative is, however, continued after Asclepius' revelation in the medieval Latin versions of the epilogue.²¹⁸ These manuscripts at times diverge from the Greek text in those cases where comparison is possible, but their contents are worth cautious consideration.²¹⁹ In section 15 of the epilogue, immediately following his account of the god's revelation, Thessalos writes: "Having spoken these words, the god ascended to heaven. And so I returned with the priest in the middle of the night, and on the following day, receiving money sufficient for myself, as well as some requisites, I was dismissed by the priest."²²⁰ In this brief conclusion to the initiation, he portrays himself as a pupil who has completed his course of study with the master, and graduates with everything necessary to take up his new vocation.²²¹ Thessalos, however, also pushed his new status a little further. He asked the priest to accompany him to Alexandria in order to test the magical remedies revealed by the god, and they departed from Thebes almost as colleagues. Once in Alexandria, Thessalos appears to have acquired greater authority, and the last scenes of the narrative show him demonstrating his powers and amazing the doubters. The defeat and disillusionment with which he began his quest for magical power are replaced by apparent success and prestige in a great transcultural center of the Hellenistic world and (through the frame of the epistle) at the imperial court.²²² Thessalos the Greek doctor has been elevated to the

²¹⁸ Codex Montepessulanus fac. med. 277 (M), and Codex Vindobonensis 3124 (V).

²¹⁹ See above, pp. 211–15.

²²⁰ Thessalos, Epilogue 15 (M): *his autem dictis deus in celum ascendit. et sic reversus sum in media nocte ad sacerdotem et in die crastino recipiens aurum mihi sufficiens et res necessarias licentiatum sum a sacerdote.* (V): *quibus dictis deus ascendit in celum. et sic reversus sum media nocte cum sacerdote et die crastina recipiens aurum mihi sufficiens et res necessarias licentiatum sum a sacerdote.* Friedrich 1968: 271–72. This section is also common to the more recently discovered versions of the medieval Latin translation. See Sconocchia 1984: 143; 1996: 399.

²²¹ The term *licentiatum* in this medieval Latin translation of the Greek text, may simply mean "dismissed," but it is also tempting to read it in the sense of the medieval licentiate, which conferred permission to teach. Perhaps underlying this paraphrase is an element of the Greek text which suggested the formalization of a new status, or the completion of the initiation.

²²² M (epilogue 16): *verum tamen rogabam ipsum, ut veniret mecum, ut probaremus simul virtutes herbarum traditarum a deo, postquam venerit tempus collectionis* – "Nevertheless, I asked him to come with me, so that we could demonstrate together the powers of the plants transmitted by the god, after the time for gathering came." V (epilogue 16–19): *rogavi tamen ipsum, ut veniret ad probandum mecum virtutem herbarum a deo mihi traditarum. et postquam advenit tempus colligendi herbas, veni in Alexandriam et colligens herbe sucum habentis maiorem probavi virtutem et inveni sicut dictum est. admiratus sum et sic expertus sum virtutem omnium in spatio anni unius et certificatus scripsi librum, per quem promisi hominem in spatio brevi medicum facere. quidam tamen ignorantes virtutem herbarum, que tradite erant per librum, reprehendebant nescientes finem, sed <postquam> tempus advenit, probavi coram eis, sicut promisi, et certificati sunt* – "Nevertheless, I asked him to come so as to prove with me the power of the herbs transmitted to me by the god. And after the time for collecting herbs arrived, I came to Alexandria and collecting plants containing sap,

status of magician by infiltrating the secret world of the Egyptian priests, and gaining a direct encounter with the divine.

BETRAYING THE SECRET: THE APPROPRIATION AND MARKETING OF ESOTERIC WISDOM

The power and the paradox of secrecy – in Thessalos’ text as in so many other situations – is that the imperative to conceal the secret is always in conflict with the intention to reveal it. Were it not simultaneously a way of hiding and a way of communicating knowledge, secrecy would have little significance in the world of human interactions, including those that are staged through a written text. Thessalos cannot simply reveal secret wisdom to his reader, he must also say, “What I am about to tell you is a secret.” This draws attention to his transgression of the rule of secrecy, but also brackets the telling as a special case in order to admit the hearer (or reader) into the circle of those who know.²²³ As I have already mentioned, this strategy can in a general way add to the allure of the text that follows. Thessalos, however, articulates his secrecy, and its value, through a narrative of interactions in a specific cultural context – or, to be more precise, in multiple cultural and transcultural contexts, since this is a story about a Greek doctor, some Egyptian priests, and the Roman empire. Thessalos’ divulgence, when analyzed across these contexts, casts light on the processes of transformation that his secrecy and his secret knowledge undergo in the passage from Egypt to the emperor’s (fictive) ears.

In his prologue, as I have outlined above, he has presented his search for hidden knowledge as an initiation. However manipulative he may have

I demonstrated the greater power and found it to be as was proclaimed. I was astonished and so I tested the power of them all in the space of one year and having become convinced, I wrote a book, through which I promised to make a man a doctor in a short time. Some, however, ignorant of the power of the plants transmitted in the book were full of reproach, not knowing the result, but <after> the time came, I demonstrated it before them, just as I promised and they were convinced.” In one manuscript of the medieval Latin translation, Thessalos travels back home and from there to Rome before concluding his narrative by entrusting his text to the emperor and enjoining him to pass it on only to one of his heirs after his death. See Sconocchia 1984: 144; 1996: 400.

²²³ This “paradox of secrecy” was described by Bellman 1984: 1–12, 144, in part by drawing on Erving Goffman’s notion of a metacommunicative “double frame” that brackets the occasion of divulging a secret as an act of communication that is not illegitimate, that indicates the speaker’s trust in the hearer’s discretion, and that identifies the speaker and the hearer as appropriate bearers of the secret. Like Georg Simmel, Bellman emphasizes the formal dimensions of secrecy in a social context. The tension between hiding and revealing was also earlier identified by Simmel 1950: 330 as one of the most productive aspects of the sociological phenomenon of secrecy. Note especially his observation that the “attractions of secrecy are related to those of its logical opposite, betrayal – which, evidently, are no less sociological” (1950: 333).

been in getting himself initiated, he claims that he succeeded and thereby assumed the status of an Egyptian priest. This adds an aura of authenticity to the text, but it also legitimates his possession of the secret knowledge of divine revelation. The telling of the secret is framed as legitimate through the device of the letter to the emperor. Thessalos adopts the structure of the Nechepso–Petosiris literature, and the traditional literary role of the Egyptian priest who communicates special knowledge to the pharaoh. The context of communication not only implies prestige and royal approval, it also signals that the act of transmitting the secret is legitimate, shared between figures to whom such knowledge is permitted. When interpreted in this light, Thessalos' prologue frames his telling of secrets according to Egyptian literary and social conventions derived from the original context of the Nechepso treatise. As I have mentioned, however, Thessalos presented his discovery to a Greek and Roman audience as marvelous magical knowledge. In this new context, the significance of secrecy becomes susceptible to revalorization. Rather than buttressing a religious hierarchy embedded within Egyptian society and culture, it could be assimilated (at best) to the esotericism of mystery cults or theosophical groups that stood apart from conventional society and culture, or (at worst) to the furtiveness sometimes attributed to "magic" as an illegitimate and anti-social category in Greek and Roman representations. This revalorization, however, is not solely a function of cultural distance, incomprehension, and fantasy. It is the result of an active process of cultural appropriation and commoditization that Thessalos undertakes in repackaging the Egyptian wisdom of Nechepso for consumption in the wider world of the Roman empire. As the broker of this cross-cultural passage, Thessalos betrays the secrecy of the Egyptian priests and that betrayal has consequences for their status and cultural identity.

In introducing his revised version of the Nechepso treatise on astrological botany, Thessalos proposed it as a commodity in the circulation of knowledge in the Graeco-Roman world.²²⁴ The purpose of the prologue was, in

²²⁴ My treatment of the Thessalos treatise as a commodity is shaped by the essay of Arjun Appadurai (1986) and the broader definitions he provides for the term "commodity" and the social processes of exchange that endow a commodity with its value. With the exception of the literary transaction between Thessalos and the emperor, in which the author may have expected some material or social reward, there is an absence of direct evidence for the treatise in an exchange context. Nevertheless, the "advertising" function of the prologue reveals that the text was intended to enter a "commodity situation," which Appadurai 1986: 13 defined as the situation in the social life of any "thing," in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) is its socially relevant feature. The prologue, in other words, represents the initial stages of a process of "commoditization," in this case the separation of revealed knowledge from its (real or imaginary) status of singularity (or separation

part, to enhance the exchangeability and value of the treatise, whether as a work that had direct use-value for an individual, or as a knowledge commodity that could be exchanged for fees by a doctor or healer in the course of medical practice or instruction. Accordingly, Thessalos not only facilitates the transmission of the treatise from its Egyptian context to the wider Roman empire, he also manages and filters knowledge *about* the treatise: its origins, its value, its authenticity. In this respect, he is not unlike the dealer in oriental carpets, who fills the knowledge gap between the geographical, social, and cultural locations of the producer and the consumer.²²⁵ Some of the knowledge that fills the gap may come from the production context of the commodity, but it is necessarily reworked for the purposes of exchange between the broker and the consumer. Thessalos, therefore, draws on Egyptian traditions, but he figures Egypt as a land of exotic allure. He mentions Egypt's antiquity, its reputation for learning; he uses the language of marvels and magic (παράδοξα, θαυμάζω, μαγική). Thessalos is also concerned with the question of authenticity, a question raised in connection with both his initial failure in using Nechepso's remedies and his later selectivity when dealing with the Egyptian priests at Thebes. How is the reader to know that this treatise contains authentic knowledge? This question is fundamentally oriented to the perspective of the potential consumer, and has two dimensions: it represents concerns over fraud and deception that are part of a Graeco-Roman discourse on magic,²²⁶ and it reveals an anxiety about the authenticity of Egyptian knowledge. The latter anxiety emerges in a period of the proliferation of literary texts and religious phenomena representing "Egypt's ancient wisdom" to the Graeco-Roman world.²²⁷ In his narrative, Thessalos responds to these concerns by

from exchange), i.e. as a secret that could not circulate, followed by its reconstruction as an object of potential value in exchanges with others. On this processual dimension of commoditization, see Kopytoff 1986.

²²⁵ See Spooner 1986 and Kopytoff 1986: 88–89. For brokers and middlemen as transmitters of knowledge (however imperfect or even fabricated) from the production context to the consumption context, see also the discussion of the Siassi islanders located between New Guinea, New Britain and Umboi in Sahlins 1974: 284–85.

²²⁶ As Dieleman 2005: 247–54 points out, such concerns are part of Graeco-Roman discussions of the wise man or magician, but not representations of the corresponding figures in Egyptian literature.

²²⁷ Spooner 1986 argues that the discourses of authenticity surrounding oriental carpets are tied to a number of modern conditions: the search for a counterbalance to general perceptions of the instability and inauthenticity of modern western cultural life; the development of mechanical reproductions; the concern for social distinction concomitant with the increasing availability of luxury goods such as carpets to the upper middle class (rather than upper-class elites alone); and a decreasing gap between producer and consumer that has led to the production of carpets more tailored to Western tastes. Obviously, the concern for authenticity takes a specific form in the modern world, but it is by no means an exclusively modern phenomenon. Of the modern

asserting his knowledge of the limitations of the Nechepso text and his discriminating judgment between good and bad Egyptian priests. He also assumes the status, prerogatives, and literary role of the good Egyptian priest, so as to claim the most direct and privileged access to his source of magico-medical knowledge: the divine revelation of Imhotep-Asclepius. In other words, he appropriates the voice of an Egyptian priest and speaks from within the tradition that he claims to present to the reader.

How successful this strategy was in convincing ancient readers of the authenticity of his text is difficult to tell, but it has been a recurrent habit of modern scholars to exercise their own powers of discrimination and to set the label of forgery on Hellenistic works like those of Thessalos, Nechepso, and others. Reflecting on a presumed decline in reason and a turn to the “alien wisdom” of the East as found in Greek texts attributed to Zoroaster and Hermes Trismegistus, Arnaldo Momigliano wrote, “I am not sure that one can calculate the consequences of being fed on forgeries. But I am sure that it makes a difference if a civilization, like the Hellenistic civilization, not only loses faith in its own principles, but admires its own forgeries as manifestations of a foreign civilization.”²²⁸ Over thirty years ago, and before Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, this was an astute observation on the limits of what Greeks could know about other civilizations, and on the Hellenistic capacity for fantasy and misrepresentation.²²⁹ But in the intervening time, there have emerged deeper and more complex histories of texts such as the *Hermetica*, which can no longer be considered “Greek forgeries,” at least not in the sense of inventions or fantasies created by Greeks and projected onto an alien culture.²³⁰ The *Hermetica*, as well as the Nechepso–Petosiris tradition on which Thessalos drew, are the traces of a Graeco-Egyptian literature that emerged in Ptolemaic Egypt, particularly in the second and first centuries BCE,²³¹ as a result of creative interactions

conditions described by Spooner, some even could apply in a general sense to the status of Egyptian cultural goods in the Roman world: increasing concerns for distinctions of authenticity in the context of increased availability, and perhaps anxiety over the status of hybrid forms produced by the reduction in cultural distance between Egypt and the Graeco-Roman world.

²²⁸ Momigliano 1975a: 148 and (more generally) 141–50.

²²⁹ Noted by Vasunia 2003: 89.

²³⁰ I have already referred in passing to the reevaluation of the *Hermetica*. Much has been written on this, but perhaps the most important works are Fowden 1986 and Jasnow and Zauzich 2005. To the extent that the Egyptian material in the Greek magical papyri has been considered (from a Greek perspective) as exoticizing hocus-pocus, there has also been a revision of these views and a greater recognition of the role of Egyptian priests in creating these texts, on which see (*inter alia*) Ritner 1995 and Dieleman 2005.

²³¹ This phenomenon began, of course, with Manetho (as described in chapter two above), but the earliest traces of the Nechepso–Petosiris tradition and the *Hermetica* are later.

and exchanges between an indigenous bilingual literate élite and the wider world of Hellenistic culture. To dismiss them as forgeries is to miss the larger significance of such works as creative reinventions of tradition, to which indigenous Egyptians themselves contributed. The accessibility of these reinventions, however, proved to be a double-edged sword, since they made aspects of Egyptian culture available for appropriation by non-Egyptians like Thessalos. Bearing in mind these newly emerging histories of the production and circulation of Egyptian knowledge and religious traditions, I would like to conclude by reorienting the problem posed by Momigliano, in order to ask whether one can calculate the consequences of cultural appropriation on Egyptians, and what difference it made to Egyptian civilization.

Broadly defined, cultural appropriation is the taking from another culture particular creative or intellectual products, or traditional ways of thought and expression, including a culture-group's history or other discourses of self-definition.²³² In contemporary usage, "cultural appropriation" usually implies some sort of detrimental effect on the originary culture, especially when a dominant group appropriates from one in a position of subordinate political, social, or economic power. In the case of cultural objects, the most direct effect is deprivation and its material consequences, but in the case of non-tangible cultural products such as songs or traditional knowledge, the possession of which may be considered non-exclusive, the effects are more difficult to assess. If, however, those intangible cultural goods are considered secret or esoteric within the originary culture and understood as the exclusive prerogative of a particular group, their possession by anyone outside that group is a harm, at least in the eyes of the originary culture and the proper possessors. That harm may consist in damage to the value of the esoteric knowledge and/or to the status of its intended possessors. Furthermore, studies of modern cultural appropriations have argued that a common detrimental consequence is the misrepresentation of the culture from which the appropriated ideas or practices are drawn. Such misrepresentations can distort elements of a group's cultural identity, constrain the members of the group to stereotyped roles, and displace or marginalize the group's own self-representations. This harm can be particularly insidious when esoteric knowledge (genuine, distorted or utterly fictive) is disseminated in a new culture using an assumed voice from the originary culture, as in the cases of Carlos Castaneda or

²³² In defining and framing cultural appropriation in the case of Thessalos and his ancient context, I have followed the analyses of the modern phenomenon in Ziff and Rao 1997: especially 1–27.

Lobsang Rampa I mentioned earlier, since cultural identity itself along with control over its salient features is being appropriated, and the very value and significance of possessing a particular culture's esoteric knowledge is being distorted in order to situate it in a new regime of value.²³³ Thessalos' appropriation of the Nechepso–Petosiris tradition and his assumption of the role of an Egyptian priest is of this last type.

In practice, identifying the specific historical consequences of this one text would be exceedingly difficult. As is so often the case with ancient evidence, there is relatively little by which to judge the reception and influence of Thessalos, apart from the survival of the text itself, its translation into Latin, and very brief references to it in other texts. A wider net must be cast. The heuristic value of the treatise resides in its capacity to illuminate an interrelated and mutually reinforcing set of causes, conditions, and consequences that put external constraints on the cultural identity and social role of the Egyptian priest in the Roman period. I have already mentioned the phenomenon of "stereotype appropriation," which allowed figures such as Chaeremon, Pachrates, and Harnouphis to enjoy prestige and renown at the court of the Roman emperor in the first and second centuries CE.²³⁴ As David Frankfurter has pointed out, this can be considered an active, strategic response that seeks advantage by assimilating the Egyptian literary figure of the heroic priest-magician to the Graeco-Roman image of the Eastern wise man or magician. On the other hand, Chaeremon's presentation of himself in the middle of the first century CE as a Stoic sage and his portrait of Egyptian priests as contemplative philosophers also indicates the extent of Greek cultural hegemony in the Roman empire, inasmuch as a member of a subaltern group is acting and perhaps seeing himself according to the perspective of the dominant group. Within the Roman

²³³ I assume here the definition of cultural identity outlined by Hall 2002: 17: "the conscious reification of ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and practices, selectively extracted from the totality of social existence and endowed with particular symbolic signification for the purposes of creating exclusionary distinctiveness." What is at stake in this situation is who gets to do the "selective extracting" and the "endowing with symbolic signification" in order to shape the boundaries of cultural identity. See the studies of Lobsang Rampa and Carlos Castaneda cited above. The case of Marcel Griaule, as analyzed by James Clifford, is more complex and more difficult to fit into the notion of cultural appropriation. Griaule, in speaking from within the Dogon culture may indeed have collaborated with certain Dogon elders, and he positioned himself as an advocate and cultural ambassador for them in the period of decolonization, but his efforts at representing their culture were shaped by European notions of a universal humanism, and anthropological ideas of cultural purity and authenticity. See Clifford 1988: 85–88. On appropriations of the identities and voices of the First Nations in the Canadian context, see the essays by Joane Cardinal-Schubert, Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, Rosemary J. Coombe, and Deborah Root in Ziff and Rao 1997.

²³⁴ In general, see Frankfurter 1998: 198–237 and discussion above. Chaeremon: see Dickie 2001: 212–13. (H)arnouphis: Cass. Dio 71.8.4; *Suda*, s.v. Ἀρνουφίς.

province of Egypt, however, there was a more coercive cultural hegemony. While there is plentiful evidence that members of the indigenous élite continued to hold their priesthoods, practice traditional religious observances, perpetuate indigenous literary traditions, and cultivate other dimensions of their identity,²³⁵ the policies and structure of the Roman administration restricted the social, economic, and political power of Egyptian priests to an unprecedented degree.

Over the first two centuries CE, the Roman administration exerted more and more control over the status and affairs of priests and temples and progressively separated and isolated the religious role of the Egyptian priest, so that holders of priesthoods could no longer combine their offices with other positions that gave them social and economic power, whether in the administration or in ordinary private life. The principle of *divide et impera*, “divide and conquer,” was applied in hardening ethnic and status distinctions in administrative and juridical contexts, especially when it came to Egyptian priests.²³⁶ In at least some areas, greater economic control was exercised over the temples through the confiscation of their sacred lands, a process undertaken in the reign of Augustus. The temples could then either lease their former estates from the government or instead receive direct subventions (*syntaxeis*).²³⁷ Although priests continued to enjoy exemptions from some taxes and liturgies, a number of other taxes were levied specifically on priests and temples, including an “installation fee” that had to be paid in order for a priest to take office.²³⁸ As early as 45 CE, supervision

²³⁵ See, e.g., Ritner 1998: 8–9; Frankfurter 1998.

²³⁶ On the Roman regulation of ethnic status, its aims and consequences, see Lewis 1983: 18–35; Modrzejewski 1989; Alston 1997; Ritner 1998: 6–7; Caponi 2005: 92–95; Vandompe and Wabens 2010: 422–25.

²³⁷ Johnson 1936: 639–41. The temple of Soknebtunis at Tebtunis leased 500¼ arourai of its former land holdings from the government on special terms, but other temple lands probably became the equivalent of ordinary domain land controlled by the government (*P. Tebt.* II 302; Evans 1961: 243–44). See also *BGU* IV 1200, a petition in which priests declared that the land of the temple of Busiris was confiscated by the public treasury, but continued to be administered by the priests in exchange for a subsidy. *P. Oxy.* XII 1434 mentions an edict of C. Turranius (prefect ca. 7–4/3 BCE) granting to C. Julius Theon land that had been sacred to Isis. See the brief discussion in Caponi 2005: 98–99. The economic power of the temples had already begun to be eroded in certain respects in the later Ptolemaic period (see Manning 2003: esp. 229–40), and according to Cass. Dio 51.17.6 Cleopatra borrowed or confiscated much wealth from the temples for the struggle against Octavian. Nevertheless, the changes under Augustus stripped temples of their former estates, and made them more directly dependent for economic support on the government and on the gifts and offerings of devotees. It is also worth pointing out that the powerful lineage of high priests of Memphis ended in the reign of Augustus, and the priestly élite at Thebes also declined in the early Roman period (see Reymond 1981: 220–21, 231; Quaegebeur 1979: 728; Quaegebeur 1980).

²³⁸ Johnson 1936: 645–47. A certain number of priests from each rank of temple was exempted from the poll-tax, and though there was generally an exemption from liturgies, this appears to have

over the payment of this fee and over the inheritance and sale of priestly offices was put under the control of a Roman official, the *Idios Logos*, or “privy account.”²³⁹ Various temple offices that had been traded by members of the priestly classes in the Ptolemaic period now came under the control of the Roman administration, often to the benefit of the fisc. This responsibility would have regularly involved the *Idios Logos* in determining whether a potential inheritor or purchaser could legitimately hold office, and the motivation for this department’s involvement was the possibility of exacting a fine or gaining the proceeds from resale of an unfilled office.²⁴⁰ The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* outlines some of the rules governing such decisions: sons could be appointed to their fathers’ office only after judicial examination, and priestly office was barred to private individuals, children born to priests older than 60, foundlings, and those who buried sacred animals.²⁴¹ Though the *Gnomon* was probably composed in its surviving form ca. 145–161 CE, in the reign of Antoninus Pius,²⁴² these restrictions on entry to the priesthood and perhaps some other regulations pertaining to priests must have developed earlier.

In this earlier period, other parts of the administration also regulated Egyptian priests. The prefect of Egypt intervened directly in priestly affairs on several occasions. Already in 4 BCE, Gaius Turranius issued an edict ordering the registration of hereditary priests and their children with the purpose of removing those not of priestly origin.²⁴³ Other edicts, less well preserved, regulated temple matters.²⁴⁴ In 120 CE, Egyptian priests and temples were put under the jurisdiction of a new Roman official, the “High Priest of Alexandria and All Egypt,” who assumed control over admission to the priesthood.²⁴⁵ From the reign of Antoninus Pius forward, Egyptian priests had to apply to a Roman high priest for permission to have heirs to their offices circumcised, an important purity requirement.

been eroded over time (Whitehorne 1980: 220–21). The list of taxes and other revenues derived specifically from the temples or directly on the priests includes the following: φόρος βωμῶν (tax on altars), δεκάτη μόσχων (tax on sacrificial calves), εἰσκριτικὸν/ἱερατεία (initiation tax), ἐπιστατικὸν ἱερέων (tax for the overseer of temples), ἱερατικά (general term for revenues from temples), πεντεφυλία (fee paid on enrollment in one of the five tribes), λεσσονεία, προφητεία, πτερεοφορεία (fees paid by the purchasers of temple offices). On these see Johnson 1936: 555–75. Temple accounts also show that they were subjected to a number of other taxes as a result of economic activities that they carried out (Johnson 1936: 642–45).

²³⁹ Swarney 1970: 57–59. ²⁴⁰ Swarney 1970: 94.

²⁴¹ *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* (BGU 1210) §§ 91–93, 96. Seckel and Schubart 1919–34: 1.34–35, 2.95–98. See also Johnson 1936: 649.

²⁴² Seckel and Schubart 1919–34: 1.4–8. ²⁴³ BGU 4.1199. Lewis 1983: 92.

²⁴⁴ PSI 10.1149 (first century CE); P. Oxy. 8.1155 (104 CE); Yale Inv. 1394V + P.Fouad 10 (120 CE). For publication of the latter, see Parássoglou 1974. See also Stead 1981.

²⁴⁵ Stead 1981.

This process involved verification that the candidate was indeed of priestly ancestry, and that his body was unblemished.²⁴⁶ In some cases, the candidate was also apparently examined as to whether he could read Egyptian texts.²⁴⁷ Accession to priestly office, previously an internal matter for the priests themselves to decide, was now very much under official bureaucratic surveillance. Traditional criteria for eligibility such as lineage, bodily purity, and literacy were now being wielded by the Roman government in order to regulate the boundaries of the priestly class and the numbers who were admitted to it.

The *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* also turned traditional prescriptions and markers of priestly status into bureaucratic rules, the transgression of which could be punished by fines. Priests could be penalized for sacrificing uninspected calves, for not contributing to the funerary dressings for the Apis and Mnevis bulls, or for abandoning office. They were forbidden to wear woolen clothing or to allow their hair to grow long – even when they were not participating in the celebration of sacred rituals.²⁴⁸ Failure to maintain the traditional signs of priestly purity would result in the steep fine of 1,000 drachmae. The *Gnomon* also indicates that the administration imposed at least some restrictions that were departures from what the Romans had come to know of traditional Egyptian practices. Not only was it forbidden for a private person (i.e. someone outside the priestly class) to hold priestly office, but priests were not permitted to have any other occupation than the service of the gods.²⁴⁹ The traditional exclusivity

²⁴⁶ Stead 1981: 413–14. See, e.g. BGU 1.347 (also in Pestman, van Groningen, and David 1990: 192–93).

²⁴⁷ P. Tebt. II 291, fr. B, 2, ll. 41–43. Sauneron 1962.

²⁴⁸ *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* §§ 71, 75–76. If the infraction was only wearing wool, the fine was 200 drachmae.

²⁴⁹ *Gnomon of the Idios Logos* §71: ἱερεῦσι[ι] οὐκ ἔξόν πρὸς ἄλ[λ]ηι χρεῖα εἶναι ἢ τῇ τῶν θεῶν [θρ]ησκείᾳ (Seckel and Schubart 1919–34: 1.29). Restrictions on practicing another occupation are also evident in a second-century CE oath sworn by Egyptian priests upon taking office: “I will not measure on a threshing floor; I will not lift a balance in my hand; I will not measure land” (for the text, see Schuman 1960 and Merkelbach 1968). As observed by Merkelbach 1968: 23–26, these declarations have approximate parallels in the “negative confessions” of the *Book of the Dead* 125. In the latter text, however, they refer to past conduct, and rather than denying the activity entirely, they deny any cheating or wrongdoing in the performance of those tasks. Merkelbach 1969: 71 attributed the change to a Late Period Egyptian degeneration into “excessive ritualism” and “fruitless separation from the real world,” but the latter separation may have been imposed on the priests by Roman authorities. The context in which the oath was used is not certain, but the fact that it was translated into Greek makes it possible that an official of the government presided over the swearing-in of priests. Quack 1997 notes that the oath was part of an Egyptian temple handbook translated from Egyptian but in an abbreviated form (Quack provides parallels in Middle Egyptian in hieratic script; on the *Handbook of the Temple*, see also Quack 2003a). In §97 of the *Gnomon*, priests are also possibly prevented from making additional income by selling dedications: οἱ αἰτησάμενοι ἀναθημάτων ποι[ι]ῆσαι κα[ὶ] πωλῆ[σ]αντες κατεκρίθησαν (δραχμὰς) φ ἐπὶ τῷ ποιῆσαι ([πωλῆ]σαντες instead of [ποιήσ]αντες suggested by Johnson 1936: 649).

of Egyptian priests was, in short, appropriated, exaggerated, and subtly distorted by a Roman administration that sought to define, monitor, and control the priesthood.

These constraints on the social and economic roles of Egyptian priests were put into place over the course of the first two centuries of Roman rule over Egypt (ca. 30 BCE–170 CE). Under the Ptolemies, the indigenous élites who held the priesthoods had been able to combine their religious titles with positions in the administration or the army, and despite the structural tensions and conflicts that came with this earlier period of foreign rule, some moved with apparent ease between the two worlds of the government and the temple.²⁵⁰ Some also moved easily between the two worlds in terms of cultural production, and left their scattered traces in narrative literature, religious and scientific texts, and even poetry.²⁵¹ This activity did not end with the Roman period, but the conditions under which indigenous élites represented themselves and their traditions changed fundamentally. While they were losing control over the boundaries of priestly status to organs of the Roman administration, their own voices and their capacities for self-representation were being crowded out by others to whom the cultural identity of the Egyptian priest had become available. While Roman law compelled those who held Egyptian priesthoods to wear linen robes and shave their heads in a state of permanent ritual purity, the exotic image of the Egyptian priest could now be assumed by others as the guise of hidden, esoteric wisdom or magical knowledge, whether in Thessalos' technical treatise, in a (semi-autobiographical) novel like Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, or in the Egyptian mystery cults themselves; in the philosophical letter of "Abammon" *On the Egyptian Mysteries*, or in the bookish world, real and imagined, of the Hermetic devotees who met in small groups and studied the secret lore of Egypt.

²⁵⁰ In the late Ptolemaic period, indigenous Egyptian elites, especially in the Theban region, often held both priestly titles as well as high positions in the administration as nome governors (*stratēgoi*) together with exalted honorific titles in the Ptolemaic court hierarchy (see e.g. de Meulenaere 1959; Blasius 2001; Moyer forthcoming b). In some cases, these elites even formed dynasties, but within the first generation after the Roman conquest this phenomenon of Egyptian *stratēgoi* came to an end. On this transition, see also Blasius 2001: 82–90; Gorre 2009a: 545–47.

²⁵¹ For an overview see Dieleman and Moyer 2010.

Epilogue

When Thessalos wrote of his quest for magical wisdom in Thebes, he gave the impression that he was seeking knowledge from an ancient community that was beginning to fade away. There were wise and learned men there, but only one of them could deliver on his promises of magic. When he found that venerable old priest, he walked with him in deserted parts of the city, and he made his desperate plea for knowledge in a sacred precinct no longer filled with people and the sounds of worship, but gripped by silence. While Thessalos appropriated and supplanted the authoritative voice of Egyptian wisdom, he also evoked the image of a “vanishing Egyptian.” The act of capturing and preserving alien wisdom, as in so many other cases, went hand in hand with a fable of its ever-receding sources.¹ The magic of empire has the power to make people disappear. On the other hand, History, Michel de Certeau has taught, is the attempt to recuperate vanished voices and a vanished past in the form of a text. Thessalos’ story reminds us that some of these voices have disappeared and some have been disappeared. If all pasts are absent, some pasts are more absent than others. Their absence is produced in particular texts and in particular contexts, both ancient and modern. And if the past is an “other” country, the Egyptian past has been doubly other, especially when considered together with the Greek past, and through the mediation of Greek texts alone. But, to follow de Certeau again, there is always a return of the repressed.²

Traces of the Egyptian voices in the long history of dialogue between Greece and Egypt are there to be found, even in texts designed to erase or supplant them; all the more so in texts written by Egyptians, or in texts like Herodotus’ *Histories* that were composed in a more dialogical mode.

¹ I borrow this image of the “vanishing Egyptian” from a remark made by Nicholas Purcell in response to a presentation of an earlier version of this chapter at Oxford in 2009 (my thanks to him), and also, of course, from the myth of the “vanishing Indian” produced on the North American frontier, in ethnography, and in government policy.

² See e.g. de Certeau 1988: 1–16; Clark 2004: 119–24.

These voices are not, of course, to be imagined as the pure, authentic, stable voices of Egyptian culture; they are not merely a means of identifying collective structures of thought or modes of practice. They are voices in action in particular historical circumstances, even – or rather, especially – when representing themselves, their traditions, and their history to outsiders. The texts at the core of the preceding chapters are all products of what Marshall Sahlins has called a structure of conjuncture: “the practical realization of cultural categories in a specific historical context, as expressed in the interested action of the historic agents, including the microsociology of their interaction.”³ At various moments in these micro-histories, Greek and Egyptian ideas were both reproduced and given new values in particular pragmatic contexts of communication and interaction. Through a transactional process, Greek and Egyptian categories shaped the events, but were also put at risk – made susceptible to change in cross-cultural acts of reference, translation, and interpretation. The aim of these studies, therefore, was not to reconstruct a “native” Egyptian voice or recover an alternative history centered on one notionally coherent cultural subject. This has been, as far as possible, an effort in dialogical rather than monological history.

Assembled from fragments, this history began and ended in Thebes with encounters between Greek intellectuals and Egyptian priests. Herodotus carried out his inquiries among the Theban priests, and they showed him a long series of statues, a palpable genealogy revealing an enormous depth of human memory. Thessalos, over five centuries later, made inquiries of the priests at Thebes in his search for magical powers, and one of them gave him direct access to their divine secrets. Herodotus cited the Egyptian priests; Thessalos usurped their authoritative position. The distance between these two Theban encounters is enormous: a distance measured not only by centuries, but also by the kinds of knowledge Herodotus and Thessalos sought; by the political, cultural, and economic conditions under which their Egyptian interlocutors responded; by the location of authority in the two discursive contexts, each of which was shaped by both Greek and Egyptian pasts and fields of knowledge. Between these two encounters, it would be possible to trace a narrative arc from Egypt under Achaemenid Persian rule to Egypt under Roman rule, passing through the generative “fringes of copenetration” in Ptolemaic Egypt, and in the Egyptian diaspora of the Hellenistic Mediterranean.

³ Sahlins 1985: xiv; see also 125, 152–53.

But, in my opinion at least, the more valuable contribution of these studies is not to be found in such a history, but in a fuller account of Egyptian historicity at each particular moment. By “historicity,” I mean a particular way of understanding the past in the present that is also conditioned by expectations of the future; not the objectively determinable “truth” of any society’s account of the past, but a situation in flux, a personal or social relationship to the past that is malleable and shaped by present needs as well as received social facts concerning the past.⁴ The historicity revealed in these studies consists of a set of common threads that formed, from an Egyptian perspective, the contexts of enunciation and action in which Egyptian subjects engaged in dialogue with Greeks. They are a collection of discourses and metanarratives, clustering around the interrelated structures of kinship and kingship, through which the Egyptian priests in these stories situated themselves as historical subjects at different moments. In a long period of intermittent rupture with the ideals of the pharaonic past, the bearers of Egyptian tradition continually reoriented themselves to that tradition and to the traditions of others by means of the human temporality of their genealogies and in relation to the figure of the pharaoh – a pharaoh who could be present or absent, human or divine, the ruling monarch or a mythical Osirian type, an ideal figure of the past or a future king of apocalyptic predictions.

In the later fifth century BCE, Herodotus encountered a distinct orientation toward the past among Egyptian priests that they expressed in long genealogies embodied in statues, in an equally long list of kings, and in marvelous tales of royal exploits from long ago. The physical, literary, and performative responses to his questions about the past impressed the Greek historian and revealed to him another kind of historicity, one in which Egyptians cultivated connections to a deeper human past than was available to him in his own genealogical and mythical traditions. The Egyptian historicity that he encountered had developed at a nexus of particular political and social conditions. Herodotus explored Egypt and interviewed Egyptian priests during a long period in which foreign rule alternated with pharaonic revivals based on ancient traditions. Access to priestly office had been reconstituted as more assertively hereditary in response both to external threats to traditional privilege, and to the relative weakness of centralized political power. By adopting the perspective of this particular Late Egyptian historicity, Herodotus found a position from which he was able to criticize Greek mythical tales and fictive genealogies (even if the

⁴ See Hirsch and Stewart 2005.

Egyptian genealogies he encountered were, in some cases, no less fictive). This was, as I have argued, the generative conjuncture in which Herodotus attempted to push beyond the limits of his Greek traditions on the remote past, and to develop a framework for universal history. In this respect at least, Herodotus' *Histories*, a text so often placed at the roots of Western historiography and ethnography, can be reimagined as dialogical: the heterogeneous product of two intersecting historicities.

A Ptolemaic resumption of this dialogue can be traced in the surviving fragments of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*, an Egyptian history that responded directly to Herodotus' uses of the Egyptian past. As I have argued, Manetho was aware of Greek historians and their conventions, but wrote in an attempt to translate and to make explicit an Egyptian historicity. He modeled his work on the traditional form of a king-list, but supplemented the basic structure with exegetical comments and narratives in order to convey the content of an Egyptian form. Like the *Demotic Chronicle*, this was a work that gave meaning to the past – and to the future – in relation to basic ideals of Egyptian kingship. This was history embodied in the pharaoh, a history that could be judged in terms of conformities and incongruities between the king as a heroic individual and the king as part of a continuous stream of succession who enacted the durable paradigm of his antecedents and kings yet to come.⁵ But unlike the *Demotic Chronicle*, which was an internally oriented document of learned exegesis, Manetho's history was addressed to a Ptolemaic court society composed largely of Greeks and Macedonians, and it aimed to teach them how to cultivate the Egyptian side of "the Janus head of Ptolemaic kingship."⁶ Manetho's motivations and choices in this particular conjuncture circumscribed the appeal of his *Aegyptiaca* in the wider Greek world. Historians of Greek intellectual history have often commented on the modest impact of Manetho's work. When Diodorus Siculus went to compose the Egyptian section of his universal *Library of History*, for example, he did not take Manetho from the shelf. Instead, he reached for Hecataeus of Abdera, whose history, for all its Egyptomanic enthusiasm, offered a different model of pharaonic history, one keyed to Greek narrative patterns and the ideals of the philosopher-king. The impact within Egypt of the knowledge that Manetho produced was more significant, but can only be traced indirectly, in the actions and

⁵ This is the pharaoh who produces what Hornung (1966) has called "Geschichte als Fest" – history as the celebration of a rite. Sahlin (1985: 35–54) has provided an even more detailed and subtle elaboration of this mode of producing and comprehending the history of a people as embodied in a king.

⁶ Koenen 1993.

self-presentation of the kings of the Ptolemaic dynasty – the last pharaohs⁷ – who, as part of their political strategy for governing Egypt, at times inhabited an Egyptian historicity. Outside of Egypt, it must be remembered, the king-list history that Manetho constructed did have a continuing life in historical thought, even if Egyptian historicity did not travel as well. As a long human chronology, Manetho's history has provoked a recurrent encounter with the limits of history among the inheritors of the Greek tradition every time a universal historian, from Eusebius and Syncellus right up to Scaliger and beyond, grapples with the fragments of the *Aegyptiaca*.⁸

In the Hellenistic conjunctures of Greek and Egyptian history outside Egypt, Egyptian historicity necessarily took a different form. Among Egyptian priests genealogical traditions could continue, but in the absence of a pharaoh, the mythical type of the king became a more immediate point of reference for determining a course of action or framing its meaning in retrospect. In the early second century BCE, on the island *polis* of Delos, an Aegean trans-shipment point for religious ideas as well as physical cargo, Apollonios, member of an Egyptian lineage of priests, told the triumphant story of his legal struggles as a divine vindication of his hereditary position. His line of priests became subjects of metanarratives that had long sustained the legitimacy of pharaonic kingship and royal succession. In a celebratory historical monument created by Apollonios and the poet Maiistas, their temple's foundation was ordained by Sarapis in dream revelations, after the pattern of a *Königsnovelle*, but in this diaspora version priests fulfilled the divine mandate directly, rather than through the mediation of a pharaoh. Their day in court, the central event around which the memorial was built, became a version of the great mythical trial between Horus and Seth over succession to the kingship of Egypt: the divine intervention of Sarapis saved not only the sanctuary, it preserved the integrity and legitimacy of the ancestral priesthood. This Egyptian metanarrative, however, was communicated in Greek and through the poetical language of Homeric epic. Through allusions to Odysseus in particular, the struggles of Apollonios, his ancestors, and the god Sarapis to establish themselves on Delos became a retelling of the venerable tale of Odysseus' wanderings and his struggle to reestablish himself and his son Telemachus on Ithaka. The miracle that Sarapis produced at the trial on Delos was thus endowed with meaning

⁷ See Manning 2010: esp. 89–102.

⁸ The ancient attempts of Eusebius, Annianus, and Pandorus to reconcile Manetho's Egyptian chronology with biblical chronology were rejected by Syncellus in his universal chronography (see especially 16–19, 36, 41–42 in the edition of Mosshammer 1984). On Scaliger, see the beginning of Chapter 2 above.

through a double syntagmatic allusion to both Greek and Egyptian narrative structures: in both frames of reference, a royal father intervened on behalf of his legitimate heir. This extraordinary adaptation of Greek epic to the telling of diasporic versions of Egyptian narratives may well have had very broad “evangelical” effects – Egyptian sanctuaries did indeed thrive on Delos, and the island was a major stepping stone in the diffusion of Egyptian religion around the Mediterranean.⁹ But the immediate discursive context of the Sarapis aretology – the structure of the conjuncture – was a dialogue among the officiants and adherents of multiple approaches to Egyptian religion in a predominantly Greek context. The salient problems, at least from the perspective of Apollonios and his lineage, were not so much acculturation or cultural fusion, but the consequences of different social and political affiliations for Egyptian traditions of priestly authority in mediating the relations between humans and gods.

Within Egypt, at the same time as the events on Delos, the human, historical pharaoh persisted as the central reference point of an Egyptian historicity, not only in the political practices of the Ptolemaic dynasty, but also in priestly accounts of the origins of their knowledge. The idealized court of the pharaohs of old, a discursive space articulated by interactions between wise kings and learned priests, continued to be the context of enunciation for authoritative knowledge. At some time in the second century BCE, a tradition of astrological knowledge attributed to the pharaoh Nechepso (Necho II) of the Saitic dynasty and to the priest-magician Petosiris (also called Petese) first began to be translated into Greek. Though a heterogeneous body of knowledge, the Nechepso–Petosiris literature had been historically reconstituted as Egyptian and it now conveyed that originary narrative, and the cultural prestige that went with it, to a wider Mediterranean world. Two or three centuries later, at the height of the Roman empire, the Greek doctor Thessalos insinuated himself into this tradition and appropriated its authoritative discourses. He did so by changing kings – a literary replacement of the Egyptian king of the past with the Roman emperor of the present – and by assuming the role of an Egyptian priest. Thessalos did not, however, succeed in overturning the Nechepso tradition; the Saitic pharaoh and his advisor Petosiris continued to be cited as authorities in their field of occult wisdom, as did other priest–king pairs in other branches of magical or Hermetic lore. In the great Paris magical papyrus, for example, there is a letter from Nephotes to another Saitic king, Psammetichus, bearing instructions for obtaining a revelation through

⁹ Turcan 1996: 82–85; Malaise 1972.

bowl divination.¹⁰ And in the later Hermetic tradition, the royal court to which reports of hidden wisdom were addressed continued to define the discourse, even if the figures were apotheosized as in the *Definitions* addressed by Asclepius to King Ammon.¹¹ These and other texts explaining the origins of knowledge have recurrently guided seekers of hidden wisdom in multiple traditions to Egypt's ancient sages, kings, and gods, drawing later scholars into a continuous dialogue with them as the most ancient and venerable authorities in various branches of arcane knowledge.¹²

So the work of Thessalos did not entirely supplant Nechepso and Petosiris, but the strategy of appropriation that he adopted in brokering the passage of their knowledge from Egypt to Rome transformed the status of the king and priest at court and the function of their discourse. When Thessalos told the Roman emperor his marvelous tale of discovery, the value that it gave his magical knowledge was not quite the same as in the heroic tales of Merire, Setne, or Petese: different kings, different historicities. Stories of secrecy, magic, and divine revelation no longer reinforced the central social and political institutions of the priesthood and pharaonic kingship, but located their powerful knowledge in esoteric spaces at the margins of society: an ambiguous world of mystery, theosophical speculation, and sorcery. Thessalos and others could assume an Egyptian identity through professions of magical knowledge, initiation into mystery cults, or Hermetic contemplation, and in doing so they partly reproduced and partly revalorized Egyptian categories in the Graeco-Roman contexts of the Mediterranean. The figure of Lucius in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, proudly displaying the shaved head of a *pastophorus* in the Roman Forum, as well as Apuleius' own magical knowledge and Hermetic inclinations provide a glimpse of the range of positions available at the intersection of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman historicities.¹³ Conversely, the fact that the Egyptian priest Chaeremon could identify himself as a Stoic sage and serve as tutor to Nero multiplies the possibilities further. These various images of the Egyptian priest were not solely the products of appropriation and exoticizing stereotypes; rather, they continued to be negotiated between the demands of the latter and the histories of wise and powerful priests that

¹⁰ *PGM* IV.154–284.

¹¹ *Corpus Hermeticum* XVI: ὁροι Ἀσκληπιοῦ πρὸς Ἀμμωνα βασιλέα. The treatise is notable for its claims to Egyptian authenticity and to the superiority of the Egyptian language to Greek (even though the text is in Greek!).

¹² For a general overview of the western fascination with the esoterica of Egypt from antiquity to the twentieth century, see Hornung 2001. On the fortunes of Hermes Trismegistus in Arabic literature, see now Van Bladel 2009.

¹³ Apul. *Met.* 11.30; *Apol.*

were celebrated in Egyptian literature. In late Roman Thebes, Egyptian priests, successors to those whom Thessalos and Herodotus encountered, continued to inhabit those imagined roles. They copied, compiled, and elaborated the glorious past of pharaohs and magicians, while also creatively readapting a learned literature of ritual practice and religious lore in both Greek and Demotic, preserving the scribal traditions of the ancient temples, while also engaging with the wider Mediterranean world as they had for centuries.

It was in relation to these Egyptian figures of the king and the priest – as well as through their understanding of the discourses and historicities of Hellenism – that the Egyptians in these fragmentary episodes articulated their historical positions. From these positions, they communicated with Greeks about the depth of the human past, about a historiography of divine law and royal morality, about the authority and authenticity of their religious offices, and about matters of science and religion. By broadening the discursive context to include these voices and the historical positions from which they spoke, and by attempting to write a dialogical and transactional history of encounters in which Egyptians as well as Greeks were historical subjects, my hope is that I have taken an initial step towards rediscovering or reimagining other such ancient encounters, the full histories of which are yet to be written.

APPENDIX I

Text and translation of the Delian Sarapis aretalogy (IG XI.4 1299)

TEXT

- 1 ὁ ἱερεὺς Ἀπολλώνιος ἀνέγραψεν κατὰ
 πρόσταγμα τοῦ θεοῦ· ὁ γὰρ πάππος ἡμῶν
 Ἀπολλώνιος, ὦν Αἰγύπτιος ἐκ τῶν ἱερέων,
 τὸν θεὸν ἔχων παρεγένετο ἐξ Αἰγύπτου,
 5 θεραπεύων τε διετέλει καθὼς πάτριον ἦν,
 ζῶσαί τε δοκεῖ ἔτη ἐνεμήκοντα καὶ ἑπτὰ.
 διαδεξαμένου δὲ τοῦ πατρός μου Δημη-
 τρίου ἀκολούθως τε θεραπεύοντος τοὺς θε[ο]ύς,
 διὰ δὲ τὴν εὐσέβειαν ἐστεφανώθη ὑπὸ
 10 τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκόνι χαλκεῖ, ἣ ἀνάκειται ἐν τῷ ναῷ
 τοῦ θεοῦ· ἔτη δὲ ἐβίωσεν ἐξήκοντα καὶ ἕν.
 παραλαβόντος δέ μου τὰ ἱερὰ καὶ προσκαθη-
 μένου ταῖς θεραπαίαις ἐπιμελῶς, ὁ θεὸς μοι ἐχρη-
 μάτισεν κατὰ τὸν ὕπνον ὅτι Σαραπιεῖον δεῖ
 15 αὐτῷ ἀναδειχθῆναι ἴδιον καὶ μὴ εἶναι ἐν μισ-
 {σ}θωτοῖς καθὼς πρότερον, εὐρήσειν τε τόπον
 αὐτὸς οὗ δεῖ ἐδρασθῆναι σημαινεῖν τε τὸν
 τόπον. ὃ καὶ ἐγένετο. ὁ γὰρ τόπος οὗτος ἦν
 κόπρου μεστός, ὃς προεγέγραπτο πω-
 20 λούμενος ἐν βιβλιδίῳ ἐν τεῖ διόδῳ τῆς
 ἀγορᾶς. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ βουλομένου συνετελέ-
 σθη ἡ ὥνῃ κατεσκευάσθη τε τὸ ἱρὸν συντόμως
 ἐν μηνὶ ἕξ. ^v ἀνθρώπων δὲ τινων ἐπισυνστάντων
 ἡμῖν τε καὶ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἐπενενκάντων κρίσιν κατὰ τοῦ ἱεροῦ
 25 καὶ ἐμοῦ δημοσίαν τί χρῆ παθεῖν ἢ ἀποτεῖσαι, ἐπην-
 γεῖλατο δ' ἐμοὶ ὁ θεὸς κατὰ τὸν ὕπνον ὅτι νικήσομεν.
 τοῦ δ' ἀγῶνος συνετελεσθέντος καὶ νικησάντων ἡμῶν
 ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ, ἐπαινοῦμεν τοὺς θεοὺς ἀξίαν χάριν ἀποδιδόντες.

The present text is based on the most recent edition of Engelmann 1975, but with a few corrections and alternate conjectures that I have outlined elsewhere (Moyer 2008).

γράφει δὲ καὶ Μαιίστας ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἱεροῦ εἰς τὴν ὑπόθεσιν ταύτην.

- 30 μυρία καὶ θαμβητὰ σέθεν, πολύαινε Σάραπι,
 ἔργα, τὰ μὲν θείας ἀνὰ τύρσιας Αἰγύπτουιο
 ἡϋδῆται, τὰ δὲ πᾶσαν ἀν' Ἑλλάδα, σείο θ' ὁμείνου
 "Ισιδος · ἐσθλοῖσιν δὲ σαώτορες αἰὲν ἔπεσθε
 ἀνδράσιν οἱ κατὰ πάντα νόωι ὅσια φρονέουσιν.
 35 καὶ γὰρ τ' ἀμφιαλεῖ Δήλῳι ἀρίσημα τέλεσσας
 τὰπολλωνίου ἱρὰ καὶ εἰς μέγαν ἡγαγες αἶνον.
 αὐτὸς δ' οἱ δηναιὰ πατὴρ ἐκόμισσεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς
 Μέμφιδος, ὁππότε νηϊ πολυζύγῳι ἤλυθεν ἄστυ
 Φοῖβου· ἔνδον εἰῶι δ' ἀέκων ἵδρυσε μελάθρῳι
 40 καὶ σε φίλως θυέ(ε)σιν ἀρέσσατο· τὸμ μὲν ἄρ' αἰών
 γηραιὸν κατέπεφνε, λίπεν δ' ἐν σείῳ τεράμνωι
 υἷα θυηπολέεν Δημήτριον, ὧι ἐπίπανχyu
 γῆθησαν θέραπες. τοῦ μὲν κλύες εὐξαμένοιο
 εἰκὼ χαλκείην νειῶι θέμεν εὖ δὲ τελέσσαι
 45 ἔννουχος ἀντιπάτροιο · καθυπνώνοντι φαανθεῖς
 δεμνίῳι ἥνωγες τελέσαι χρέος. ἀλλ' ὅτε καὶ τὸν
 γηραλέον λίπε μοῖρα, πᾶϊς γε μὲν ἐσθλὰ διδαχθεῖς
 ἐκ πατρὸς μεγάλως σέβεν ἱερά, πᾶν δὲ κατ' ἡμαρ
 σὰς ἀρετὰς ἤειδεν. αἰεὶ δ' ἐλλίσ(σ)ετο νειόν
 50 ὄππῃ σοι δείμειεν ἀριφραδέως κατάλεξαι
 ἔννουχο(ν) ὑπνώνοντι, διηνεκὲς ὄφρα κε μίμνοις
 σηκῶι ἐνιδρυθεῖς μηδ' ἄλλουδὶς ἄλλοδαπῶι ἐν
 οὔδει ἐνιχρίμπτοιο. σὺ δ' ἔφρασας ἀκλέα χώρον
 ὄντα πάρος καὶ ἄσημον, αἰεὶ πεπληθότα λύθρῳι
 55 παντ(ο)ίῳι μετὰ πολλὸν ἔτι χρόνον· ἐννύχιος γάρ
 εὐνῇ ἐπιπρομολὼν λέγες· ἔγρεο· βαῖνε δὲ μέσσα
 παστάδος ἀμφὶ θύρεθρα καὶ εἴσιδε γράμμα τυπωθέν
 τυτθῆς ἐκ βύβλοιο τό σε φρονέοντα διδάξει
 ὄππῃ μοι τέμενος τεύχηις καὶ ἐπικλέα νειόν.
 60 αὐτὰρ ὁ θαμβήσας ἀναέγρετο, βὰς δὲ μάλ' ὥκυσ
 ἄσπ(α)σίως ἶδε γράμμα καὶ ὥπασεν ἀργυραμοιβόν
 τιμὴν οὗ κτέαρ ἔσκε· σέθεν θ' ἅμα βουλομένοιο
 ῥηϊδίως καὶ νειὸς ἀέξετο καὶ θυόεντες
 βωμοὶ καὶ τέμενος, τετέλεστο δὲ πάντα μελάθρῳι
 65 ἔδρανά τε κλισμοὶ τε θεοκλήτους ἐπὶ δαίτας.
 καὶ τότε δὴ ῥα κακοῖσι κακὸς Φθόνος ἐνβαλε λύσαν
 ἀνδράσιν οἱ ῥα δίκηι ἀνεμωλίῳι ἐκλήϊσαν
 δοιῶ σὸν θεράποντα, κακὸν δ' ἐπὶ θεσμὸν ἔτευχον
 ἢ τί χρὴ παθέειν ἢ ἐκ τίνα τίσαι ἀμοιβὴν
 70 θωῆς ἐνγράψαντα. κακῶι θ' ὑπὸ δείματι πᾶσαν
 ἡὼ τεῖι νύκτας τε περὶ κραδίην ἐλέλιζεν
 τάρβος θειοπόλοιο· σὲ δὲ σταλάων ἅμα δάκρυ
 λίσσετ' ἄλεξῆσαι μηδ' ἀκλέα τεῦξαι ἀμοιβὴν

- σῶι ἰκέτει, θανάτου δὲ κακὰς ἀπὸ κῆρας ἐρύξαι.
 75 οὐδὲ σύ, παμνήστοισιν ἐφespόμενος πραπίδεσσι,
 λήσας τοῦ, νύχιος δὲ μολῶν ἐπὶ δέμνια φωτός
 ηὔδησας· μέθες ἄλγος ἀπὸ φρενός· οὐ σέ τις ἀνδρός
 ψῆφος ἀΐστωσιν, ἐπεὶ εἰς (ἐ)μέ τείνεται αὐτόν
 ἦδε δίκη, τὴν οὐτις ἐμεῦ περιώσιον ἄλλος
 80 ἀνήρ αὐδήσει· σὺ δὲ μηκέτι δάμναο θυμόν.
 ἀλλ' ὅποτε χρόνος ἵξε δικασπόλος, ἔγρετο ναοῖς
 πᾶσα πόλις καὶ πάντα πολυμμιγέω(ν) ἅμα φῦλα
 ξείνων ὄφρα Δίκης θεομήτιδος εἰσαΐοιεν.
 ἐνθα {σαι} σὺ κείνο πέλωρον ἐν ἀνδράσι θάμβος ἔτευξας
 85 σή τε ἄλοχος· φῶτας γὰρ ὀλιτρο(νό)ους ἐπέδησας
 οἱ ῥα δίκην πόρσυνον, ἐνὶ γναθμοῖς ὑπανύσας
 γλῶσσαν ἀναύδητον τῆς οὐτ' ὅπιν ἐκλεεν οὐθείς
 οὔτε γ(ρ)άμμα δίκης ἐπιτάρροθον· ἀλλ' ἄρα θείως
 στεῦντο θεοπληγέσιν ἐοικότας εἰδῶλοισιν
 90 ἔμμεναι ἢ λάεσσιν· ὅπας δ' ἄρα λαὸς ἐκείνῳ
 σὴν ἀρετὴν θάμβησεν ἐν ἡματι, κα(ὶ) μέγα κῦδος
 σῶι ζεύξας θεράποντι θεόδητον κατὰ Δῆλον.
 χαῖρε, μάκαρ, καὶ σείο συνάρορος οἱ τ' ἐνὶ νειῶι
 94 ὑμετέρῳ γεγάσιν θεοί, πολύμυε Σάραπτι.

TRANSLATION

- 1 The priest Apollonios recorded this by
 the god's decree. For our grandfather
 Apollonios, an Egyptian from the priestly class,
 arrived from Egypt, bearing the god,
 5 and he continued serving him as was his hereditary custom,
 and he seems to have lived ninety-seven years.
 My father Demetrios, having succeeded,
 and following on in serving the g[o]ds,
 was rewarded by the god for his piety
 10 with a bronze statue which is dedicated in the sanctuary
 of the god. He lived sixty-one years.
 When I received the sacred things and attended
 diligently to the services, the god sent an oracle to me
 in my sleep, that a private Sarapieion must
 15 be dedicated to him and that it must not be in
 rented lodgings as before, and that he would discover the place
 himself where it was to be founded, and he would indicate
 the place; which did indeed happen. For this place,
 which had been advertised for sale on a little bill
 20 in the passage way of the marketplace, was full

of manure. Since the god was willing, the purchase was accomplished, and the temple was very quickly constructed in six months. When, however, certain men banded together against us and against the god, and brought a public lawsuit against the temple
25 and against me “for punishment or fine,” the god announced to me in my sleep that we would win. Now that the contest has been completed and we have won in a manner worthy of the god, we praise the gods, rendering worthy thanks.

Maiistas also writes on behalf of the temple regarding this case.

30 Myriad and astonishing, much-praised Sarapis, are your deeds; some have been proclaimed throughout the divine battlements of Egypt, some throughout all Hellas – and of your bed-partner Isis. Saviours, you always attend on noble men, who in everything wisely take thought for what is holy.
35 And also on sea-girt Delos have you made illustrious the rites of Apollonios and brought them to great praise. Of his own accord, the father long ago brought them hither from Memphis itself, when in a many-benched ship he came to the city of Phoebus. Within his own house, though unwilling, he established them
40 and in kindly manner pleased you with smoky offerings. Time, however, struck down the aged man, and left in your chamber to conduct the sacrifices a son Demetrios, in whom verily worshippers rejoiced. You heard the father’s successor praying at night to put a brazen image in the temple,
45 and to finish it well: for having appeared to him as he slept in his bed, you ordered him to fulfil his obligation. But when fate left the aged man, the child, having received noble things from the father, greatly revered the holy rites, and every day he sang your virtues, and always begged you
50 to declare manifestly to him while sleeping at night where he should build for you a temple, so that you might constantly remain established in a precinct, and not press on from one foreign land to another. You spoke of a place hitherto inglorious, and without distinction, ever filled with filth
55 of every kind, even after much time; for at night, going forth to his bed you said: “Awake! Go through the middle of the porch around the gates and behold imprinted writing from a small papyrus, which, if you comprehend, will teach you where you should fashion me a sanctuary and much-famed temple.”
60 Then, astonished, he awoke, and having gone exceedingly swiftly he gladly saw the writing and granted a banker’s price, which the property was worth; and since you wished it,

temple and fragrant altars and sanctuary easily
grew, and in the hall all the seats and couches
65 for the god-summoned feasts were completed.
And then indeed wicked Envy cast rage among wicked men,
who with a windy double lawsuit
summoned your servant, and prepared an evil decree,
which prescribed "either to suffer punishment, or to return penal
70 recompense." Under an evil dread all day
and every night, terror whirled the ministrant's
heart around. And as he let tears fall,
he besought you to protect him, and not to bring about an inglorious
reward
for your suppliant, and to ward off evil dooms of death.
75 Nor did you, having attended with all-remembering mind,
forget him; but coming at night to his bedstead,
you proclaimed: "Put anguish from your mind; no man's
vote will destroy you, since against myself
is this suit directed, on which no man will speak
80 in greater measure than me; but as for you, wear away your spirit no
longer."
Now when the judgment time came, the entire city
assembled in the temples, and all the tribes of much-mixed
strangers, so that they might give ear to divinely wise Justice.
There you produced that prodigious wonder among men,
85 along with your wife; for you bound fast the wicked-minded men,
who arranged the suit, having made speechless in its jaws
the tongue, whose religious reverence no one celebrated
nor its helping writ of law; but by divine power
they declared that they were like god-struck images
90 or stones. And indeed all the people on that day
were amazed at your excellence, and great glory
you harnessed for your servant throughout god-founded Delos.
Farewell to you, blessed one, and to your spouse, and to the gods
94 who are in your temple, O much-hymned Sarapis.

*Translation of the Madrid manuscript of Thessalos,
De virtutibus herbarum (Codex Matritensis Bibl.
Nat. 4631)*

(1) † Harpokration to Caesar Augustus, greetings.

Since many in their lives have tried, august Caesar, to hand down many marvelous things, but none have been able to bring their promises to completion, owing to the darkness of fate pressing upon their thoughts, I think that I alone among the men of all time have accomplished something marvelous <and known to few>. (2) For having set my hand to matters which transcend the limits of mortal nature, I have, through many trials and dangers, brought to these matters the proper completion. (3) After I had practiced letters in the regions of Asia and had become better than everyone there, I determined to have profit from the knowledge for a time. (4) And having sailed to much-desired Alexandria with a great deal of money, I went around to the most accomplished of the scholars and because of my industry and quick wit I was praised by all. (5) But I also went continually to the lectures of the dialectical physicians, for I greatly desired this knowledge. (6) When it was time to return home, and as my medical studies were already duly progressing, I went around to the libraries searching out <the necessary material>. I found a book by Nechepso containing twenty-four remedies for the entire body and every disease, according to the zodiac, by means of stones and plants, and I was amazed at the wonders it promised. But it was, as it seems, the empty delusion of royal folly. (7) For having prepared the “solar pill,” much admired by him, and the rest of the medicines, I failed in all the treatments of illness.

(8) Supposing my failure to be harsher than death, I was consumed by grief. And what’s more, having trusted rather precipitously in the treatise,

This translation is based on the text of Codex Matritensis Bibl. Nat. 4631 according to the edition of Friedrich 1968. I have included his critical signs in order to alert the reader to problematic passages. For ease of reference in the technical sections of the treatise devoted to medicinal preparations, I have included in parentheses the transliterations of Greek names of plants and some other ingredients after the standard translations found in *LSJ*.

I even wrote to my parents concerning their power as though I had already tested them, and announced that I was returning. (9) Now I could not stay in Alexandria because of the laughter of my colleagues, for even fine things are privately begrudged. (10) And I had no desire to go back home again, having been found rather less than my promises; so I went around Egypt, driven by the goading of my soul, and seeking to accomplish something of my rash promise, or – if I did not achieve this – to give up the rest of my life to death. (11) †My soul ever prophesying that I would consort with the gods, I continually stretched out my hands to heaven, and besought the gods to show me some such favor through the image of a dream, or by the spirit of a god, through which I would be able to return, exultant and happy, to Alexandria and to my native land.

(12) And so having arrived in Diospolis – the oldest city of Egypt <I declare>, and containing many temples – I spent some time there. For there were scholarly high priests there and <elders> adorned with subtle learning. (13) As time went on and my friendship with them grew, I inquired if some magical operation was still preserved. And I despised the majority of them for making professions equal to my own rashness, (14) but I was not shaken from the friendship of one of them who could be trusted because of the impressiveness of his character and the measure of his age. This man professed to have the power to effect a direct divine vision by means of a vessel. (15) So I entreated him to walk with me in the most deserted parts of the city, having revealed nothing of what I desired.

(16) We went away, then, into a sacred precinct surrounded by the deepest silence, and I suddenly fell upon my face, weeping and clinging to the high priest's feet. (17) Surprised by the unexpectedness of this sight, he asked why I did this, and I told him that power over my soul lay with him, for a compulsion to converse with a god possessed me, and if I fall short of this desire, I shall bid adieu to life. (18) Having raised me up from the ground and having consoled me with most gentle words, he promised that he would gladly do these things, and he bade <me> keep pure for three days. (19) My soul relaxed at the promises of the high priest, and I clasped his right hand and thanked him, my tears flowing like a spring, for by nature unexpected joy calls up more tears than grief. (20) After we returned from the sacred place, we devoted ourselves to purity, the days for me counting down like years because of my anticipation. (21) When the third day came, I went before dawn and <humbly> greeted the high priest.

A pure chamber had been prepared by him, along with the rest of the things for the inquiry. And I, owing to the foresight of my soul, and

unknown to the priest, had papyrus and ink to mark down what was said, if necessary. (22) When the high priest asked me whether I would like to speak with a soul of some dead man, or with a god, I said “with Asclepius,” and that it would be the perfection of his kindness if he would entrust me to speak one on one. (23) He would, though not happily – for the features of his face revealed this – but he had promised. So he enclosed me in the chamber, and ordered me to sit opposite the throne on which the god would sit. After summoning the god through his ineffable names and exiting, he closed the door.

(24) As I was sitting and my body and soul became faint at the wonder of the vision (for human speech could not describe the features of the countenance, or the beauty of the surrounding adornment), he stretched out his right hand and began to speak: (25) “O blessed Thessalos, who has gained honor in the presence of a god, as time goes on and your successes become known, men will worship you as a god. Ask, then, <without fear> about what you wish, for I shall gladly provide everything.” (26) But I scarcely heard – for I was struck and overwhelmed in my mind as I looked at the form of the god – but nevertheless, I inquired as to the reason I failed in the remedies of Nechepso. To which the god said: (27) “King Nechepso, a man of most sound mind and adorned with every virtue, did not obtain from a divine voice anything which you seek to learn; having made use of a noble nature, he observed the sympathies of stones and plants, but the times and places in which it is necessary to pick the plants, he did not know. (28) For according to the seasons, everything waxes and wanes with the emanation of the stars; and that divine, most refined spirit which exists throughout all substance especially pervades those places where the emanations of the stars were in the time of the cosmic nativity. I shall present this from one example as a proof for the others.

(29) “Now there is a plant called hemlock (*kōneion*). This plant seems to have arisen from the emanation of Mars, and at the cosmic nativity [Mars] happened to cast its rays in Scorpio. <And so it struck the hemlock in the regions of Italy;> for the *klima* of Italy belongs to Scorpio. (30) This plant, therefore, having drawn in more of the divine emanation, were it eaten by a four-legged beast or a human, would be instantly lethal. (31) Some even, through ignorance of the plant, have lain down beside it in the wilderness and fallen asleep, and in sniffing the power in its exhalations they have died. (32) Similarly Crete <.....> in aspect. (33) In Crete, therefore, men eat the very same hemlock plant, and it is the most pleasant of garden herbs. (34) To such a degree do the emanations of the gods have power by time and place.

(35) "It is clear, then, that the king of all the stars is the sun; when this star is in Aries it attains its exaltation, and receives an exceedingly great power in this sign of the zodiac. (36) Plants, therefore, are most powerful at that time, not only because of the sun, but because this sign is common to all the gods who cause changes; (37) for, as I said previously, it is the exaltation of the sun, but (also) the depression of Saturn, the house of Mars, and the triangle of Jupiter. Such great powers does the aforementioned sign possess. (38) When the sun is in this (sign), take the plants to be mentioned, and extract the juices without boiling, for the quality is altered by fire. And quickly squeeze out the juice, and putting it in a dish or cup, mix the juice with honey. (39) When you have done this, put it in a glass vessel and set it aside for [...] days. . . . {if you want raw juices, decoct it.} After that, prepare according to each remedy.

<The plant of Aries: sage (*eleisphakos*)>

Aries, the first zodiac sign: concerning sage.

(1) From Phamenoth 22, that is Dystros 18, according to the Romans from the 15th day before the Kalends of April: the first plant is sage. (2) This has the greatest powers for bringing up blood and for consumptives, those with wasting disease, and splenetics, and for hysteric conditions. (3) For bringing up blood, to 3 *kyathoi*¹ of juice are added 1 *uncia*² of Attic honey and the mixture is given to drink on an empty stomach, and the rising of blood is immediately cured. (4) For those with wasting disease, little pills are prepared as follows: mix up 5 drachms³ of Corycian saffron (*crokos kōrukios*), 4 drachms of ginger (*zingiberis*), 9 drachms of base horehound (*stachus*), 14 drachms of the seed of the sage, parched and sifted, and 2 drachms of pepper (*peperis*) with the juice and make half-drachm pills and give them on an empty stomach early in the morning and at bedtime. Let it be swallowed together with 2 *kyathoi* of pure water. (5) For splenetics, a pill is also made for them as follows: 12 drachms of the root of the caper-plant (*kapparis*), ground and sifted, 9 drachms of the fruit of black ivy (*kissos melas*), 4 drachms of white myrtle (*myrtos leukos*), 6 drachms of ginger (*zingiberis*); having ground them fine, mix with the juice and make little pills, 1 drachm each, and give one early in the morning and one at bedtime. (6) For hysteric conditions, such as indurations, discharges, and persistent pains, an application is prepared as follows: 14 drachms of Tyrrhenian beeswax (*kēros turrēnikos*), 8 drachms of stag's marrow (*muelos*

¹ A *kyathos* is a liquid measure equal to ca. 46 ml or 1.6 fl. oz.

² The *uncia* is a unit of weight equal to ca. 27.3 g or 0.96 oz.

³ The drachm is a unit of weight equal to ca. 4.3 g or 0.15 oz.

elapheios), 4 drachms of dried roses (*rhoda*), ground, 4 *kyathoi* of the juice of the plant. Put the solubles into the dry ingredients and the juice and boil until the fourth part is boiled down, and then reserve in a tin vessel; use by anointing the womb. If the condition is severe, boil the plant with the roots and use in a sitz-bath. (7) A most effective emollient for those with nephritis and sciatica is made from the root as follows: 8 drachms of beeswax, 16 drachms of gum ammoniac (*ammōniakon*), 9 drachms of galbanum (*chalbanē*), 8 drachms of Syrian cedar oil (*kedria*), 14 drachms of bull's suet (*stear taureion*), 32 drachms of the root, ground and sifted. Use by mixing the dry and the wet ingredients. The above-mentioned application is also beneficial for such conditions.

<The plant of Taurus: vervain (*peristereōn orthos* = *verbena officinalis*)>

(1) Taurus, the second zodiac sign: concerning vervain. From 23 Pharmouthi, or rather 18 Xanthikos, according to the Romans, from the 14th day before the Kalends of May; the second plant is vervain. (2) The effects of this cannot even be believed. For it removes hopeless ophthalmic conditions in three days by the quality of the preparation. (3) For ophthalmia and tumors and swelling of the eye, and every kind of epiphora use this sort of salve: 14 drachms of saffron (*krokos*), 12 drachms of starch, 6 drachms of horned poppy juice (*glaukion*), the whites of 3 eggs, 2 drachms of tragacanth (*tragakantha*); having ground these things up, mix with the juice and use by making salves. (4) For every discharge, boil down the plant with the roots and use as a wash, for it stops it immediately. (5) For blindness from glaucoma and cataracts and desperate conditions a wet preparation of this kind is made: 2 drachms of the gum of Hercules' woundwort (*opopanax*), 4 drachms of haematite (*lithos haimatitēs*), 4 drachms of saffron (*krokos*), finely ground dyer's buckthorn (*lukion*) amounting to 2 drachms, 6 drachms of horned poppy juice (*glaukion*), 2 drachms of tragacanth (*tragakantha*), 4 drachms of Attic honey, 2 drams of white pepper (*peperi leukos*), 2 drachms of balsam (*opobalsamon*), 6 drachms of the root of the vervain (*peristereōn orthos*) ground and sifted, 3 drachms goat bile, 2 *kyathoi* of the juice; mix up the dry and wet ingredients and use. This remedy will remove the conditions written above in three days, but pterygia, sycosis on the eyelids, sties and things similar to these in one day. (6) It is not possible to tell the praise of divine power, but it is possible to tell the praise of each remedy; for trial will demonstrate its force.

<The plant of Gemini: holy vervain (*peristereōn huptios* = *verbena supina*)>

(1) Gemini, the third zodiac sign. From 25 Pachōn, which is 20 Artemisios, according to the Romans, from the 13th day before the kalends of

June; the third plant is holy vervain. (2) The juice of this plant is made up in the same way, then a most effective medicine is prepared for cancers, lumps and so-called "figs"; it is prepared in this way: 12 drachms of saffron (*krokos*), 7 drachms dried roses (*rhoda*), 14 drachms of pontic melilot (*melilotos pontikos*), 7 drachms of friable alum; having ground these things, mix evenly, also pouring in 4 *sextarii*⁴ of the juice, and boil in a new pot until it attains the consistency of honey, and use. It also heals everything in the body.

<The plant of Cancer: comfrey (*symphytum bulbosum*)>

(2) <F>rom 25 Pauni, which is 19 Daisios, according to the Romans, from the 13th day before the Kalends of July; the fourth plant is comfrey. (3) The juice and the root of this plant have many powers. From the root, in fact, a plaster is prepared which joins together wounds and severed tendons: 60 drachms of beeswax, 12 drachms of stag's marrow (*muelos elapheios*), 22 drachms of frankincense powder (*manna libanou*), 32 drachms of the root ground and sifted, 26 drachms of Attic honey, 24 drachms of rose oil (*elaion rhodinon*); mix up the dry and the wet ingredients and use. (4) For ruptures in the chest, such as of the arteries . . .

[At this point the Madrid manuscript breaks off.]

⁴ A *sextarius* is a measure equal to ca. 546 ml or 19.2 fl. oz.

Dating the composition of Thessalos,
De virtutibus herbarum

Cumont dated Thessalos' treatise to the middle of the first century CE on the basis of its dates for the sun's ingress into the signs of the zodiac. Since astrologers and astronomers in the early Roman period used sidereal rather than tropical longitudes in marking the positions of the sun, the moon, and the planets, the date at which the sun entered a particular sign was delayed by about a day every 100 years, according to ancient estimates. This allowed Cumont to estimate when the treatise was composed by comparing Thessalos' dates to a calendar of solar ingresses interpolated from information found in Varro's *De re rustica*, which was composed in 37 BCE. The basic principle is sound, but Cumont's dating can now be checked and adjusted using a much larger volume of astronomical data that has been gathered in subsequent studies of ancient astronomy and astrology.

In comparing modern calculations with those of twenty-eight horoscopes recorded in Vettius Valens dating from 37 to 188 CE, Neugebauer and Van Hoesen found that calculations of the sun's longitude by the second-century CE astrologer were greater than modern ones by 2 to 7 degrees, and that the differences tended to decrease in the horoscopes calculated for later dates. This decreasing trend, they observed, was roughly commensurate with the precession of the equinoxes. They concluded that these calculations were based on tables which differed from modern calculations by ca. $+5^\circ$ in 50 CE and ca. $+3.5^\circ$ in 160 CE, figures which were comparable to the deviations observed in the Demotic and Greek planetary tables preserved on papyrus.¹ A similar comparison of modern calculations and Thessalos' dates for the ingress of the sun into the various signs shows

¹ Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 171–73, 179–82. The Demotic tables are those in *P.Berlin* 8279 and the Stobart Tablets; the Greek tables are *P.Tebt.* 274 and *P.Lund* 5.2. The change over time appears to be somewhat more pronounced in Valens' figures themselves: ca. $+6.3^\circ$ in 50 CE and ca. $+2.9^\circ$ in 160 CE. It is important to note, however, that Valens' figures are quite variable. The average deviation from the trend line is ca. $\pm 0.8^\circ$. These are my own calculations based on comparing the solar longitudes in Vettius Valens (see Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 181, Table 16) to modern figures calculated for the same date and time. For these calculations and those below, I used the tables

that the differences fall within the same range as the deviations in Vettius Valens' calculations. A comparison of the four dates of ingress from the Madrid manuscript with modern calculations of the sun's longitude at around dawn (7:00 a.m.) at Memphis on the days in question shows that Thessalos' figures were $4^\circ \pm 0.5^\circ$ greater than their modern counterparts.² If the author was using the same procedures to calculate solar longitude as Vettius Valens, this difference in longitude would correspond to a date of ca. 108–140 CE.³ Cumont only used the dates from the Madrid manuscript, which breaks off in the middle of describing the uses of comfrey (σύμφυτον), the plant corresponding to Cancer in the zodiac. The medieval Latin translations, however, provide dates of ingress for the rest of the signs. In most cases, the figures have become corrupt in the process of transmission, but a manuscript in Vienna preserves dates that are more or less internally coherent as a series and that correspond in the first four instances to those in the Greek of the Madrid manuscript.⁴ Though the inclusion of more dates makes the sample somewhat more significant, the figures are also more variable (perhaps as a result of textual corruption). With the dates from the Vienna manuscript, the difference between Thessalos' figures and modern calculations is $3.8^\circ \pm 0.7^\circ$, which corresponds to a date of 108–154 CE when compared to the data derived from Vettius Valens.

The precise methods of calculation used in the horoscopes recorded by Vettius Valens are unknown, but two methods of calculating sidereal longitudes have been preserved in manuscripts and on papyrus: the *Handy Tables* of Ptolemy, and a method discovered among the Oxyrhynchus papyri that employs an annual template together with a table of solar epochs (in this case, summer solstices).⁵ When the differences between figures derived from these methods and modern calculations are compared

in Tuckerman 1962 and 1964 (together with the supplement published by Houlden and Stephenson 1986), and a simple linear interpolation, which is certainly sufficient for the relatively predictable motion of the sun and the level of accuracy required for the comparisons undertaken.

² The choice of dawn is based on the Egyptian epoch in counting days (i.e. days were counted from dawn to dawn, not from midnight to midnight as in the Julian system). See Neugebauer and Van Hoesen 1959: 167–69. For the modern figure I calculated an average of the solar longitudes for the date and time in question based on a sample of twenty years in the period 50–150 CE (including a representative number of leap years and non-leap years).

³ This estimated range is based on comparison of a linear trend line derived from the data in Vettius Valens and the average difference between Thessalos' figures and modern calculations ($4^\circ \pm 0.5^\circ$, 95% confidence). This value corresponds to a date of 124 CE \pm 16 years when compared to Vettius Valens.

⁴ Wien, Nationalbibliothek, Lat. 3124, s. XV, fos. 49v–53 (V in Friedrich 1968). For a discussion of this manuscript and its tradition, see Pingree 1976: 85–86 and 1992; Sconocchia 1984 and 1996. The additional dates provided by this manuscript are as follows (converted to the Julian calendar): Leo: July 22; Virgo: August 22; Libra: September 22; Scorpio: October 21; Sagittarius: November 17; Capricorn: December 17; Aquarius: January 16; Pisces: February 24.

⁵ See Jones 1997, 1999: 1.119–21, 2.48–53.

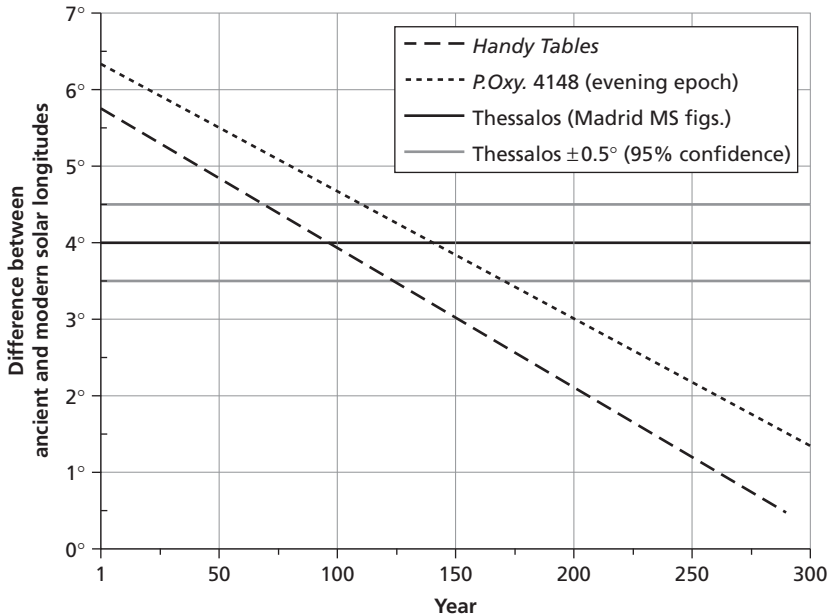


Fig. 5. The Madrid manuscript of *Thessalos* compared to other ancient methods of calculation.

to the same deviations in *Thessalos*' figures, the results suggest dates ranging from the late first century to the late second century CE. When the figures for the *Handy Tables* are compared to those in *Thessalos*, the approximate date for his text would be ca. 77–131 CE or ca. 77–153 CE if the dates from the Vienna manuscript are included.⁶ In the case of the templates and epochs method, the comparison results in a date of ca. 116–176 CE, or ca. 116–200 CE with the Vienna figures (see [figs. 5 and 6](#)).⁷ These comparisons

⁶ Calculations of solar longitude based on the *Handy Tables* were derived from the calculations in Jones 1999: 1.349–50 for the first of every month in the years 30 BCE, 70 CE, 170 CE, and 270 CE. These calculations were then compared to modern calculations for the same dates (see above) to determine the average differences in each year. The trend line produced by these figures was then compared to the difference between *Thessalos* and modern calculations to arrive at the approximate date at which the values coincide. The result was a date of 104 CE \pm 27 years (using only the Madrid manuscript), or 115 \pm 38 years (using the Vienna dates). Using the *Handy Tables* as a basis, Jones 1999: 1.343 has devised an approximative formula for converting modern tropical longitudes to ancient sidereal equivalents. When the change over time in longitudes produced by this method is compared to the difference between *Thessalos* and modern calculations, the results are (not surprisingly) similar: ca. 76–136 CE, i.e. 106 CE \pm 30 years (using only the Madrid manuscript), or 76–160 CE, i.e. 118 CE \pm 42 years (using the Vienna dates).

⁷ *P.Oxy. 4148* contains a table of epochs, giving a series of moments of the summer solstice (assuming a solstice at 8° Cancer) in days and fractional days for the years 161–237 CE. The changes in these

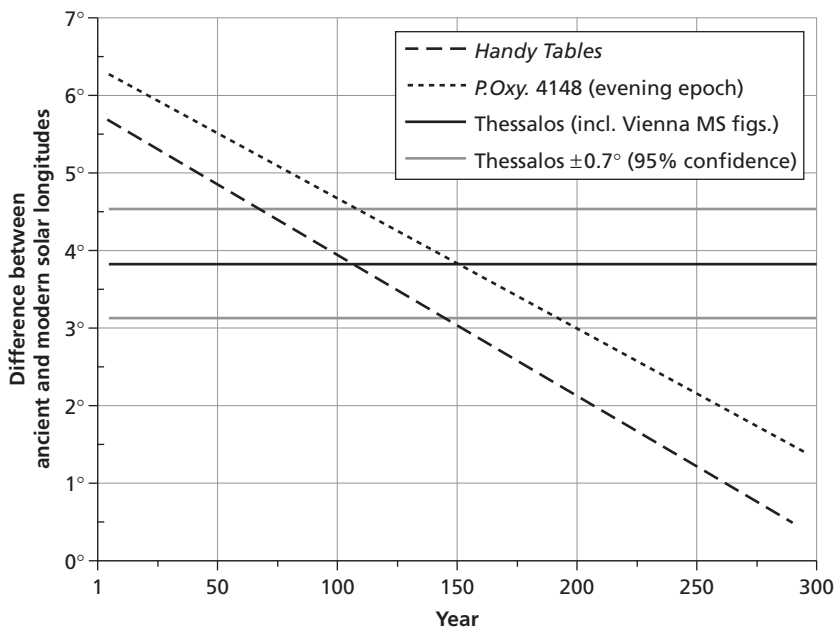


Fig. 6. The Vienna manuscript of Thessalos compared to other ancient methods of calculation.

suggest a range of possible dates for the composition of Thessalos' treatise that is somewhat later than what Cumont proposed, but certainly not in the fourth–sixth centuries CE as others have suggested. Any attempt to offer a precise date for the composition is impeded by the small sample of dates in Thessalos and the wide range of deviation typically found in ancient calculations – deviations not solely attributable to the difference between tropical and sidereal longitudes, but to inaccurate tables, computational error, and so forth. Bearing these constraints in mind, it is nevertheless possible to exchange Cumont's mid-first century date for a range of dates from ca. 75 CE–175 CE, with the most likely period being ca. 100–130 CE.

moments over time show that the calculator of the table was using sidereal longitudes (Jones 1997: 226). I calculated solar longitudes for these precise times (assuming an evening epoch, as suggested by Jones 1997: 227; 1999: 1.120, and excluding figures that were identified as erroneous) and compared them to the assumed solstice point at 8° of Cancer to arrive at a series of differences over time. I then extrapolated this series into a linear trend line. When the latter was compared to the differences between Thessalos and modern calculations, the resulting dates were 146 CE \pm 30 years (Madrid figures only), or 158 CE \pm 42 years (Vienna figures included).

If the Vienna figures are used, the range would be ca. 75–200 CE, with the most likely period ca. 100–150 CE.⁸

⁸ Though there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case, it would have been possible for a knowledgeable copyist to revise the dates in the treatise according to contemporary calculations in the early phases of transmission. If so, the dates would indicate the period in which they ceased to be kept up to date, and became “fossilized.” This period would then be a *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the treatise.

Bibliography

Notes on abbreviations used in the text and bibliography:

- Journal titles are given in the abbreviated forms used in *L'année philologique*, or (for titles not included in the latter) those used in the *Online Egyptological Bibliography* (oeb.griffith.ox.ac.uk).
- Classical texts are abbreviated according to *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1996), or *A Greek–English Lexicon*, ed. H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, H. S. Jones et al., 9th edn with new suppl. (Oxford, 1996).
- For abbreviations of published Greek papyri and related corpora and instruments, see the *Checklist of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets* (scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html).
- Most abbreviations of Greek and Latin inscriptions may be found in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edn).
- Abbreviations used in this work and not included in the reference works noted above are listed below:

CE	Inscriptions in Roussel 1915–16.
IAlex.Ptol.	E. Bernand (ed.), <i>Inscriptions grecques d'Alexandrie ptolémaïque</i> (Cairo, 2001).
IMT LApollon/Milet	M. Barth and J. Stauber, <i>Inschriften Mysia & Troas</i> (Munich, 1996).
IScM III	A. Avram, <i>Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris antiquae. Series altera: Inscriptiones Scythiae Minoris graecae et latinae</i> , vol. III: <i>Callatis et territorium</i> (Bucharest 2000).
RICIS	Inscriptions in Bricault 2005.
Urk.	<i>Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums</i> (Leipzig, 1903–39; Berlin, 1955–61).
Abry, J.-H. (ed.) (1993)	<i>Les tablettes astrologiques de Grand (Vosges) et l'astrologie en Gaule romaine: Actes de la Table-Ronde du 18 mars 1992 organisée au Centre d'Études Romaines et Gallo-Romaines de l'Université Lyon III</i> . Collection du Centre d'Études Romaines et Gallo-Romaines 12. Paris.
Adler, W., and P. Tuffin (2002)	<i>The Chronography of George Synkellos: A Byzantine Chronicle of Universal History from the Creation</i> . Oxford.

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